

Oral Questions

I have always said that if there are ways that we can add to those means by which we can simplify the process we are quite prepared to look at them and consider them in a positive way.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the government is spending millions of dollars in propaganda that is disguised as straightforward answers regarding questions concerning the goods and services tax.

Will the government, in an honest and straightforward way, discuss in this place the changes that it is suggesting to people in private will take place to make the goods and services tax more palatable? If the government is going to distribute information such as this, why not discuss the changes it wants to make right here in this House and make sure we all know about it?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me just make a few points on that. The finance committee of the House of Commons in the last Parliament recommended that we use a wide means of advising people what the GST is all about, how it affects them and how it affects the cost of living. That is what we are proceeding to do because a finance committee of the House of Commons asked us to do that.

The hon. member wonders why we provide this information. Just yesterday we had 6,300 phone calls from people asking for information about the goods and services tax.

The hon. member asks why we don't discuss it here in this House. We have had committee hearings, we have had the legislative process, we have had debate in this House. We have made a number of changes as a result of good, solid recommendations from the finance committee.

Unfortunately, my hon. friend did not participate in any of those positive recommendations. All that he said was to scrap the whole thing. He had no positive idea or understanding of what the process was all about. He was totally negative. This is the sort of thing that makes no contribution to the positive development of legislation.

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister who is aware that three weeks ago Dr. Schindler, a professor at the University of Alberta, reported to the federal government that the proposed pulp industry regulations do not take account of the fact that dioxin is a known carcinogen and that those regulations do not reflect the expert evidence of the federal government's own scientists.

Since Dr. Schindler concludes that allowing discharges of chlorinated organic substances from new pulp industries should be prevented because of the risks to human health, will the Deputy Prime Minister assure this House that the government will redraft the regulations, taking account of the fact that dioxin is a known cancer-causing agent?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows that it is the intention to add over time to the regulations that were recently published limiting the pulp mills to certain harmful agents that are being discharged into the waters and air.

My hon. friend will be pleased when the full story is told. Yes, we are very sensitive to the potential of harm to human health as a result of some of these agents in the environment.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. We are told we have to wait for The Green Plan, we have to wait on carbon dioxide emissions, we have to wait in relation to the greenhouse effect.

Three weeks ago Dr. Schindler advised the federal government that tens of thousands of Canadians are at risk now from dioxins, furans and chlorinated organic compounds. Dr. Schindler has warned that the regulations, as posed, will present a risk of increased heart disease and increased deaths from cancer to Canadians if they are implemented.

Canadians should not have to wait. Will the Prime Minister show some backbone on just one environmental issue? Will he bring forward regulations which recognize that dioxins are a cancer-causing agent and their release