

Oral Questions

ing the United Appeal Campaign and the CHEO telethon.

[English]

On behalf of all Members, I express my gratitude to the pages and to the page program staff for the fine work they have done for our country.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

NEW NATIONAL SALES TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. It is about his new national sales tax. You know the tax we are talking of, Mr. Speaker. It is that tax which the Minister says is so simple, so simple that for two years neither he nor his Department can come up with a booklet to explain it. That is the tax we are talking about.

Will the Minister confirm that he is slapping a new national sales tax of 9 per cent on reforestation equipment which is currently exempt from manufacturers' sales tax? At the same time will he confirm that he is slapping a new national sales tax of 9 per cent on pollution control equipment which is currently exempt, and on product safety testing equipment which is currently exempt, and on farmers' irrigation systems which are currently exempt?

Why does the Minister want to discourage anti-pollution equipment, reforestation, and safety equipment?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked a number of questions. Let me comment on farmers' irrigation systems. Because of the nature of this tax there will be a total refund of the tax paid on all inputs farmers pay on any of the products they buy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1430)

APPLICATION OF NEW TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is saying that there are some new exemptions, since he has only said food and medical equipment so far, then let us hear a list of those exemptions. The definition of his tax value added includes labour.

Will the Minister confirm that for the first time ever he is slapping a sales tax on safety clothing used in nuclear power plants, for the first time ever he is slapping a sales tax on oxygen air packs used by people fighting fires, including chemical fires? Will he confirm that for the first time ever he is slapping a sales tax on carbon monoxide alarms, for the first time ever he is slapping a tax on life preservers used by loggers? Will he confirm that to the House?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, clearly from the way the Leader of the Opposition has phrased these questions, I do not think he understands the way this tax works. I believe it would be important for him to wait for the technical paper and to read that paper. Then I think he will get all his answers.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Either the Minister will confirm that they are not exempt or he will admit that his paper adds value to labour added and a value added tax that would englobe them. If it is so simple, why do we not have the booklet that he has been trying to produce for two years so that we can explain it to the House of Commons and the people of Canada.

[Translation]

APPLICATION OF NEW SALES TAX—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm to us that, for the first time, he will hit safety belts, safety cables, safety hooks, safety boots and safety glasses with a new 9 per cent national sales tax? Can he confirm to the House that, for the first time, he will impose a new 9 per cent sales tax on equipment used to control the safety of aircraft and on baby diapers? Finally, can he confirm to us, once and for all, that he will impose a new 9 per cent sales tax on burials and funerals?