

Government Orders

I would say to the prospective homeowners in this country: Holy mackerel! Not even first year algebra is going to help you through this one.

• (1610)

The minister offered to give me a briefing. I am going to take him up on it. I want a blackboard. I want the minister to bring the blackboard into the House of Commons. I want him to explain this formula to the members of Parliament and to the people of Canada.

I once had the honour of representing one of the ridings in this area. Some former colleagues and new colleagues are here. I am going to take the minister to a remedial class in mathematics at one of our high schools and see whether they can put some sense back into his head and return some simplicity to his mind so that he can go back to the drawing board and redraw this complicated nightmare of a tax.

After promising small businesses in this country that at least they would be entitled to a small yearly payment for doing all this work for the federal government, the minister has now reneged on that commitment. He is now going to provide a one time only payment that will not nearly cover the increased costs faced by small businesses in collecting this new tax.

It is no small wonder that, in these circumstances, the Minister of Finance refuses to meet John Bulloch of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I have never refused him.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): He refuses to meet anybody in consulting his new budget.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I have never refused them.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Do we now hear from the minister that he is willing to meet with Mr. Bulloch and other representatives who want to meet him before he draws his new budget? Do I hear that from him?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Bulloch has never called me.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I want to suggest to Mr. Bulloch and anybody else who wants to make a representation before the minister before he brings

down his next budget that the minister may have re-lented. Mr. Bulloch, get on the phone, talk to the minister, if you can. I say this on national television and I say it within the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

The minister had said that the tax would be visible. He had said that the exact amount of the tax would appear on every bill. He changed his position. Today he says that it might be visible. We will wait and see. We are not at all sure. Will it have to appear on the bill? We will wait to find out. The minister had said that in implementing the new tax, he would reduce the taxation rate on middle incomes. He also went back on this promise. The minister had said that in implementing the new sales tax, he would eliminate the 3 per cent surtax on middle-income Canadians. Instead of eliminating it, Madam Speaker, he raised it to 5 per cent.

The minister had said that the new tax would not be inflationary. Today he admits that the new tax will drive up the rate of inflation. Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the new tax will be an engine of inflation. Is the minister naïve enough to have us believe today that businesses, business people, entrepreneurs will not try to recover the tax by passing it on to consumers, by transferring the tax to consumers? That is naïve! This is not a minister who understands the collective psychology of Canadians and consumers. Is the minister naïve enough to pretend as well that unions and workers will not seek to protect themselves by demanding pay raises throughout the country?

Shirley Carr and other labour leaders have already warned the minister. Mr. Minister, they are unanimous in saying that workers in Canada will bear the brunt of this tax.

It shows monumental naïveté on the part of this minister. Everything will cost more, much more! The minister had said that the new tax would be fair. Madam Speaker, it is totally unfair. His new tax will be regressive and will hit the poorest very hard. The minister thinks that he has sweetened the pill by proposing a 7 per cent tax instead of 9 per cent, but Canadians will not swallow it. The minister has engaged in a little mathematical game, which is really a big fraud. He reduced the tax rate, but to make up for it, he raised the taxes on individuals.