

hake box. This area does not overlap the haddock nursery closure area on Emerald and Western Bank and therefore there are no foreign activities in areas closed to Canadians.

The silver hake fishery is prosecuted in deep water on the edge of the Continental Shelf and therefore damaging to productive fishing habitat is minimal. Canadian observers are on board all foreign vessels and monitor all fishing activities.

The haddock nursery area was introduced in 1987 in an attempt to protect the excessive harvest of juvenile haddock by otter trawl vessels. The closure is landward of the silver hake box and covers an area of 5,000 square miles on Emerald and Western Banks which lie to the west of Sable Island. The outer boundary of this nursery area is proximate to the inner boundary of the silver hake box.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member's time has expired. The hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre.

[*Translation*]

TOURISM

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, this debate is extended because of a question I had asked in this House, last April. I had then asked the Minister how he intended to address the issue of rebates for tourists from other countries.

Indeed, I will not repeat the minister's answer, but he had indicated that along with Ministers of Finance and the Standing Committee of the House on Finance, he had initiated action to solve that issue. The travel wholesalers had some problems because it was a very complex matter and they would be at a disadvantage compared with the so called package deals for tourists from abroad.

• (1910)

In the second part of my question, Mr. Speaker, I had asked the minister how come according to the wholesalers whatever rebate system he would promote, it would in no way help to solve their problem.

So, as the months went by the wholesalers insisted that the rebate system for tourists from abroad, especially those from United States, Mr. Speaker, would give an

undue advantage to the wholesalers of United States coming to Canada.

They informed the minister many times that there was a problem. The minister imagines, of course, that he has solved the problem. But obviously, the problem is still there. When I asked the question, I was not a mind reader, but I realized the minister insisted that the refunds would really solve the wholesalers' problem.

Indeed, it was in April and I knew the tourist season in Canada would peak in May, June, July and August. Now, we are at the beginning of October and the evidence is overwhelming. M. Speaker, tourism has indeed substantially declined in Canada. There has been more complaints from the wholesalers that one of the reasons tourism has dropped was because there are so many rumours about the new GST—Imagine, it has not yet come into effect and it is already creating problems!

Consequently, I wanted to further inform the minister. There is always time to make changes. What kind of changes could he make? I do not know. But I would be very happy if his parliamentary secretary, here in the House, could advise his minister that, indeed, maybe the time has come to look at ways to improve the rebate system so that it would be acceptable to the wholesalers.

But as I am speaking to you, Mr. Speaker, the new leader of our Party, as you know, the Hon. Jean Chrétien, has given me new responsibilities that do not come under tourism anymore. The new member—let's say since 1988—the member from Broadview—Greenwood, is indeed for the Official Opposition critic for tourism.

Unfortunately, given the Standing Orders, he would have liked to make his maiden speech, not as a new member of this House, but as our critic for tourism. He will develop his ideas and will convey them in the next few years. I do not want to elaborate too much on this issue, I simply want to ask the hon. member responsible for tourism tonight, who will answer for the minister, if he would ask the minister for information, since this question is very important for the tourism industry in Canada, which will become in the future our greatest industry. We have to take whatever time it takes to ensure the tour operators, who bring a lot of tourists into Canada, fully understand the issue and to work with them to find a solution that will promote tourism in our country, since it is probably our major export industry.