

*Statements by Ministers*

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to understand why the Official Opposition, the Liberals and the New Democrats, are opposed to this Bill or want a six-month hoist on referring the Bill to committee, while claiming at the same time that our Bill does not go far enough in facilitating the admission of refugees to Canada. They should make up their minds once and for all and decide whether they would rather deny refugees the right to enter Canada, so we will have to go on working with boards and hearings and calling additional witnesses while we know that the existing system is already much too slow. And that is why it is so important for this Bill to have these important provisions that facilitate the entry of refugees in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to have Bill C-55 adopted, not for our own benefit as parliamentarians but for the benefit of refugees. We want to make things easier for them. And when we talk about public opinion polls, it is obvious Canada was built thanks to the refugees who came to our shores, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) is the first Minister of State for Immigration among the last five we have had who has managed to table a valid and serious piece of legislation that will make refugees better aware of their rights and make it easier for them to enter Canada. That is essential, and I think we have a duty to let this Bill, Bill C-55, go to committee as soon as possible. Of course there may be a few minor changes, but I think that on the whole, in this Bill the Minister wanted to take quick action to facilitate refugee access to this country and enable Canada to maintain its international refugee policy.

Mr. Speaker, our purpose in tabling Bill C-55 was certainly not to turn our backs on refugees. In fact, we want to offer genuine protection to those who need our help. However, if we are to focus our efforts on protecting bona fide refugees, we must rationalize the process and clamp down on abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I see I have very little time left, but I am glad to give up my time so that Canadians, once again thanks to our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Conservative Government and our Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), will experience a historic moment in their lives: tax reform.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, tonight I am proposing sweeping changes to Canada's tax system. These changes will directly affect all Canadians for many years to come.

Our tax system should be a strong force in meeting the challenges that face our country.

It must help individuals and businesses deal with the challenges of the 1990s and into the next century.

It must reinforce our ability as a country to continue to provide the social programs needed by our people.

It must generate the hope and opportunity that will motivate Canadians to build a strong country in a very competitive world.

But to do this, the tax system must have the respect of Canadians. We know that it does not. And we know why.

We all know that the tax system allows many profitable corporations to avoid paying a fair share of tax, year after year.

We all know that it allows some people with very high incomes to pay less tax than the average Canadian wage-earner, year after year.

We all know that it allows those who are able to use special tax breaks to shift the burden to others less able to carry it.

Canada needs a tax system that raises revenues in a fair and reliable way; a system that supports our national effort to promote economic growth and create more and better jobs.

Over the years, our tax system has become a crazy quilt of special incentives, special deductions and special write-offs.

Each special incentive gives a break to someone. But each special tax break means that taxes have to be higher for everyone else. Special breaks have made the income tax more and more complicated, and less and less fair.

During the past two years, I have acted to strengthen the integrity of the tax system. Many tax breaks have been eliminated. But further action is needed to restore faith and trust in the system, to ensure that it works for the benefit of all Canadians. Tonight I am taking that action. I am proposing sweeping reforms to the personal and corporate income tax system. Beginning January 1, 1988:

We will reduce or eliminate many special tax breaks. Those high-income individuals and profitable corporations who currently pay little tax will carry a greater share of the tax burden.

We will further increase the fairness of our personal income tax by converting tax exemptions and deductions to tax credits, with particular benefits for lower-income and elderly Canadians.

We will reduce the burden of taxation on those who have not been taking advantage of special tax breaks. As a result, 80 per cent of Canadian households will have lower personal income taxes in 1988. A typical family of four earning \$30,000 will pay about \$500 less in taxes. Federal income tax will be

● (2000)

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### TAX REFORM 1987

#### STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

**Mr. Speaker:** Pursuant to Order made Friday, June 12, 1987, the House will now revert to Statements by Ministers. The Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson).