

Government Orders

smoking in this country, that is why the high taxes were introduced in the first place. I cannot endorse the removal of these taxes, telling kids that it is okay to smoke and okay to break the law. I will be voting against the bill.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I was quite interested in the hon. member's statement. The sense I get from across the way is that one person wrote the same speech for everybody. Much of the same misinformation seems to be passed along from one member of the Reform Party to the next.

The hon. member stated that this was an eastern Canadian problem. I am wondering where he gets that information. The hon. member knows this was a major problem in Alberta. There have been a number of complaints by people from all over the country. Smuggling was a problem in every single province.

Other hon. members on the other side suggested that we failed in this matter. The hon. member said yesterday that smoking had gone up because of this. I found that quite interesting so I called Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada reported that Canadians smoked approximately 3.6 billion cigarettes in the year ending April 1994 compared to approximately 4.3 billion smoked in the year ending April 1993. That seems to suggest that smoking has gone down dramatically. A lot of it has had to do with the policies brought in by this government, especially the hard work done by the Minister of Health in this area.

These hon. members seem to always suggest that this is just a native problem, that somehow we have two systems of laws in this country, one for native Canadians and one for other Canadians. From people who obviously have not spent a lot of time with natives in this country, I find it quite distressing hon. members would even suggest that. There is no two tier system of laws in Canada. We have one set of laws for all Canadians.

There was a problem before we became the government. The RCMP was having problems dealing with specific situations on certain reserves. I wish hon. members on the other side would visit some of these places. It is not so easy to send in a whole bunch of RCMP officers and expect them to solve a situation. These people are good people. They are Canadians and the majority of them on these reserves respect the laws. The people on the reserves want all Canadians to know they are law-abiding citizens. Yes there are certain problems on the reserves. Certain individuals on the reserves do not follow the law.

We as a government made a commitment when we brought in this bill to make sure the RCMP went into these areas and dealt with the problems. To suggest, like the other side is suggesting, that we somehow militarize these places, send in the forces, knock them all around and that somehow we will stop the smuggling is all wrong.

•(1715)

What that would do is create animosity, create mistrust and it would not be a good way to set a good standard for all Canadians to live by.

I want to ask the hon. member if he really believes there are different levels of laws in this country for certain Canadians or is it just the rhetoric of the Reform Party that he is being pressed into saying this. Does he really believe that there are Canadians—

Mr. Strahl: Do you really believe your question?

Mr. Speller: Yes I do really believe my question. Does the member really believe that there are different levels of laws in this country for Canadians? If he does, how does he propose to solve some of the problems that he has outlined here?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, after all of that I should be allowed another 15 minutes for sure.

I will respond to the hon. member. He talked about disinformation but I think all the disinformation comes from that side of the House. We were talking about it and the way it actually is. He brought out some stats from Stats Canada. If you listen to the dates, Mr. Speaker, he was comparing the numbers before the introduction of Bill C-32, before the government reduced the excise taxes.

I have no doubt in my mind whatsoever that cigarette smoking will go up because the price has come down dramatically. Stats Canada said that there is a direct relationship. There is no doubt in my mind that smoking will go up especially among young people and we now find especially among young women.

He is talking about more than one set of laws in this country. Yesterday we were trying to point that out to the members over there and they invoked closure so we could not get our point across.

However, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development introduced a law that says natives in this country, in Yukon and so on, under the agreements in Bills C-33 and C-34 are exempt from the charter of rights, yet everybody else in this country is under the charter of rights. Therefore, obviously there are two sets of laws in this country for two different groups. That addresses the wider range and also the narrow situation regarding the reserves that straddle the border.

I remember the Minister of National Defence sitting in this House when there was discussion and debate about some shooting at a helicopter that was flying over the reserve to monitor or do something regarding the smuggling problem. They were so afraid to take any action. He said that it was okay to shoot at the helicopter as long as you did not hit it.