

Government Orders

I would like to go back to 1984. At that time we were collecting \$70 billion from the taxpayers and we would spend around \$110 billion or \$40 billion more than we collected. Between 1984 and 1991 we took in \$40 billion more through taxation, through the taxation of average Canadians. Now we are collecting around \$110 billion, but we still spend \$30 to \$40 billion more a year.

This legislation will not serve the purpose of reducing our national debt. You know that, Mr. Speaker, because if you had the same type of administration in your house you would be bankrupt. But, no, what we are doing is that we are going outside the country to borrow money. We borrow money on the world market. I have to say that up to 1984 we used to borrow money, but we used to borrow money from Canadians, from their savings. Now Canadians do not have enough money. They cannot lend the money so we have to go outside the country. We are not masters of our own house any more. This is the tragedy of this administration.

It did not address the problems when it was first elected and now it tries to solve the problem through a system that is not going to work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. On debate, the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, when I examine Bill C-21 concerning the deficit, I was struck by the simple fact that the deficit has become an incredible burden for all Canadian taxpayers.

My colleague from Alberta mentioned that from 1984 to 1990-1991, the government of Canada had a revenue surplus from Canadian taxpayers. It is true that in a period of prosperity the Government of Canada could get much higher revenues than expected. Despite that, we found ourselves with an increased accumulated debt.

I am not trying to say here that the Conservative government is totally to be blamed for the deficit. That is not what I am trying to say at all.

There has been a lack of fiscal responsibility in this country for a good 15 to 20 years. I do not blame solely the Conservatives. I simply want to show that the problem is mainly in the way that Canadians are taxed. Is there something more fundamental in a democracy than the way in which we tax individuals and companies?

Twenty-five years ago, here in Canada, we had the chance to get a royal commission, the Carter commis-

sion. At that time, Mr. Kenneth Carter was the person responsible for that royal commission, which mandate was to modernize, if you will, the tax system in our country. That document was considered revolutionary in those days; it was even used as a taxation model for modern countries in classes at Harvard University in the United States. Afterwards, many parts of the Carter commission report were used by Scandinavian countries wishing to rejuvenate their taxation systems, to improve their fairness and equity.

And what did we do in Canada? We did not even publish the report. Why? The answer is simple enough: the financial elite did not find it favourable enough. Therefore we never heard about it. It was never published and Canadians never had access to a most remarkable document. Kenneth Carter, that great Canadian, offered a tremendous service to our country but, his work was still not published.

Where is the problem? It is quite simple: in this country the financial elite protects its own interests; good for them. It does not protect your interests or mine, nor those of most of my colleagues, but it protects its own. That is why the middle class must compensate, it must make up the remaining tax revenue the government needs to operate.

And then comes Bill C-21; some sort of camouflage which I fail to understand. We know quite well that all revenues are added to the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the federal and provincial levels. Will we solve the debt problem by creating this other fund? No way. What we need is a thorough reform of our taxation system to make it be fair and equitable. Naturally, such a reform would improve the people's confidence and I am sure it would contribute to getting us out of our present situation.

As my colleague from Alberta mentioned, it is very unfortunate that, in recent years, we have had to go abroad to borrow. It is most regrettable because ever since the Confederation, and that means more than 120 years, we always could count on Canadian savings to finance government operations. Now, as my colleague was saying, we are forced to go abroad and we are no longer even masters in our own house. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. There should even be a law preventing the government from going to the international market if it is unable to finance its own operating costs. It should be done internally. We are not a banana republic; we are a sophisticated country.