

Income Tax

Commerce (Mr. Horner). This does not seem to indicate that the government is in any particular hurry to get this bill passed by the House.

After using the red herring of national unity, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stated in Calgary earlier this month that the major issue in Canada was economic policy. After having a nice long weekend, he stated earlier this week in the House that he was very happy to be back now that the opposition is turning its mind to economic questions, rather than knocking the RCMP. Only a few days prior to that the Prime Minister decided the economic issue was an important one. I am not sure we can accept the criticism that we finally made that decision ourselves.

As for the knocking of the RCMP, I want to remind the House that on the same day the Prime Minister made that remark, the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) explained some matters in careful detail in the House. On November 8 he indicated that the fundamental principle of the parliamentary system, which is at stake here and which is being violated by the government of Canada, is that ministers of the government must take responsibility for the acts of public servants under their general direction.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clarke: Later on he said that we have seen far too frequently the blaming of officials in instances where the minister should take the responsibility. We saw that in the case of Larry Stopforth, the executive assistant to the present Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer), and we are now seeing it in the case of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. His final reference was to the illegal acts which the House and the country were aware of. He indicated that the purpose was to determine by whom these illegal acts were committed—

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I feel I should rise to indicate that this is not relevant to the debate we are having at this time. This debate concerns the income tax bill, and not the RCMP, etc. I am sure all hon. members are aware of the fact that there are some rules in the House which have to be followed once in a while.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must point out to the minister that I happened to be listening closely to the hon. member. I was trying to figure what his argument on the points he raised was leading to, and I imagine that within a few seconds or minutes, he will return to the subject or perhaps satisfy the Chair that he is speaking to the point. Otherwise, I will have to call him to order.

[*English*]

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I should like to welcome the Minister of Finance back to the House. I assure him I am trying this up with the remarks made by the Minister of

[Mr. Clarke.]

Industry, Trade and Commerce yesterday in this same debate. Referring back to the remarks made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on Tuesday concerning illegal acts, by whom they were committed and at whose direction, he concluded by saying the following:

They were committed, so far as is known, by members of the security services, and here I make the distinction between members of the security service and members of the regular force of the RCMP.

It was quite clear from the remarks of my leader that there was no attack by this party on the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clarke: The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce was trying to delude the House and himself yesterday into believing we were trying to ride to power, on this side of the House, on the backs of the RCMP.

Mr. Chrétien: That is true.

Mr. Clarke: The remarks which have been made in this House over the past week would indicate that that is not the case. It is not the purpose of my party to have anything to do with the knocking of the RCMP. I remind the Minister of Finance that it was the leader of my party who during the summer recess urged the government, in view of the worsening economic conditions in Canada, to recall parliament early and to present a new budget. Goodness knows for how many weeks and months the government has refused to bring down a new budget. The government said there would be an economic and fiscal statement, but that is not a budget. All that did is curtail debate and prevent the opposition from having a budget debate.

● (1632)

Mr. Johnston: A shameless mockery.

Mr. Clarke: I want to refer to the remarks of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce once again. He referred to the falling dollar. We wonder if he recognizes that the falling dollar is the result of the failure of the economic policies of his colleagues. In Winnipeg, the minister said that the fall in the value of the Canadian dollar has been useful, and said "I hope it stays around for a while".

I wonder if the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has talked to anybody in Canada who today has to pay the increased prices which are the obvious and unavoidable result of this lower dollar which he thinks is such a wonderful thing. While we are talking about responsibility in debate, a matter raised by the Minister of Finance, I would like also to recall the remarks of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce yesterday when he accused hon. members on this side of the House. The remarks I refer to are found at page 758 of *Hansard*, if the Minister of Finance wants to check that out and if he can get away from his reading. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce said:

There are Canadian citizens on the other side of the House betting that the Canadian dollar will go down more. They are buying American dollars, Canadians sitting on the other side of the House.

Mr. Paproski: A shameful remark, and it is untrue.