

Government Orders

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased you recognized me. Mind you, with the shouting match going on between the members to my left and the members across from me, I wondered if I would ever get a word in edgewise, especially from the members on my left.

I do not like this bill. I have a lot of reservations about the way the government has handled the transfer payments. I recognize there are a great number of problems, and I know there are no easy answers, but we are not going to support this bill.

• (1310)

On the other hand, I am also realistic enough to realize the moneys contained in this particular bill are very much needed by the provincial governments. It is fine to impose the bill, but not to unduly hold it back. For every day these provinces do not receive their moneys they must borrow, and then perhaps they have a more difficult time looking after the needs of their people. Let us never forget these moneys are going to help people.

I sat through the interventions by the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam on this particular amendment. The people to my left seemed to be very much concerned with the GST and the possibilities of its harmonization. They are accusing the government, of course, of having something in this particular bill that would facilitate harmonization. Well there is no surprise in that. The Conservative government has said from the beginning it would like to have harmonization with the provincial sales taxes across the country.

I am wondering if perhaps the New Democratic Party has had some inside information from some of its provincial leaders as to their inclination towards harmonization. Perhaps it has lost control of its provincial arms and Ontario and British Columbia, very much NDP-run provinces, might be ready to harmonize with the federal government.

I cannot understand otherwise why there is this great fear and harangue by the NDP members to my left about harmonization. It would seem to me they could just grab the phone, call up Mr. Bob Rae, and he, being a good NDP, would say: "Absolutely not. Never will we ever harmonize". It would be the same thing with the premier of British Columbia, so I am at a loss to understand this great debate about harmonization. I would expect they would be in a very good position to keep their ideology

within their party, and make sure it certainly does not happen, at least with Ontario and British Columbia.

Something tells me there is more to this than meets the eye when you sit and really listen to the long, drawn-out debate about it. I would love to have some of that inside information they may all have, because it would certainly allow us to prepare for what is coming. Many of us have no idea, and we certainly are not confidants of the NDP governments in those provinces. We certainly do not know what their intentions are in terms of harmonization, but if their protests are any indication, I have a feeling that is the way these governments are going to go in the not too distant future. They are afraid this particular legislation might have some clause that will facilitate it.

I am not going to carry on much longer because I do not want to hold up the debate on this bill. I would like to see that the people, who are really the beneficiaries of the moneys being transferred, are able to collect those moneys as quickly as possible. There is a lot of poverty and hardship out there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Fee): The hon. member for Timiskaming.

Mr. Rodriguez: Well he was not in his place when I stood up. A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I do not want to criticize the Chair, but I think when you recognize people they ought to be in their place, okay?

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem at all recognizing the member for Nickel Belt. In fact, it will give me more ammunition in my speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Fee): In that case, I will recognize the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, he will need all the ammunition in the next election to win Timiskaming, I believe that.

I want to speak in support of the amendments brought in by the member for Essex—Windsor. I think he has recognized the problem of harmonization, which is what the federal government has been after the provinces to do with respect to the GST.

I understood when this government took office it was going to be a new era in the relationships between the federal and provincial governments. There was no longer going to be a confrontational approach, which was the