

*Government Orders*

• (1540)

If you were to go out after the meal to a private box at a Montreal Expos game or a Toronto Blue Jays game or an Edmonton Oilers game or a Vancouver Canucks game, do you know that you would be able to write off 80 per cent of those entertainment costs against the taxes that your company would owe to the Government of Canada? Those are the kinds of benefits which have been given out by governments in our country.

One of the most important corporations in the City of Windsor is Hiram Walker Distilleries, a corporation which has employed people in Windsor for years. It was subject to a massive takeover bid by Olympia & York, the Reichmann corporation in Toronto which wanted to spend over \$2 billion to purchase Hiram Walker.

As it turned out they were not successful in taking over Hiram Walker. If they had succeeded in purchasing Hiram Walker at a cost of \$2 billion, they would have had to pay interest on the \$2 billion which they borrowed. The interest on that \$2 billion would have been deducted from the taxes that Olympia & York would have had otherwise to pay to the Government of Canada. A takeover that would not have created a single job and would in fact have eliminated jobs, would have ended up being paid for by the people of Canada through tax breaks that are built into our system. That is the kind of reality which exists in this country.

It is an approach which has many problems associated with it. Perhaps the biggest problem is the tremendous unfairness which it creates in our country.

Let me say that the average person in my constituency, if he or she goes out to a Tigers baseball game, if he or she goes out for a meal, that person cannot take 80 per cent of the cost off the taxes that they pay. Let me make it very clear, if some of my constituents are watching, please do not let me be seen as suggesting that they try to deduct from their income taxes 80 per cent of the cost of their entertainment.

Of course, they do not get tax breaks. The average person in this country does not get a tax break. The ordinary family in this country does not receive tax breaks. The large corporations do, and that is what we have to change.

That is why we cannot support anything that would demonstrate any confidence in this bunch of incompetents, as my colleague has called them charitably, on the other side of the Chamber. They are a bunch of incompetents who, during the election campaign in 1988, told the people of Canada that if free trade was accepted there would be no problem for social programs. The Prime Minister said social programs would be enhanced.

I did not bring my dictionary, but we have clearly here got a new meaning for the word "enhanced". My dictionary has always said that enhanced means improved, made better. Is that not right?

Now it seems to mean destroyed, cut back, chopped, reduced, because that is what has happened to the unemployment insurance program and pensions. There have been clawbacks on pensions. That has happened to family allowances and transfers to provinces for health care. It has happened in the case of day care and regional development programs. We could go through a massive list of social benefits which have been attacked by a party that at the same time has given out benefits for the rich and for the corporate sector. Yet there are cut-backs for the poor, cut-backs for social programs, cut-backs for the future.

The minister stated at the beginning of his speech today that we had a great budget in front of us. Of course it is the budget that implements the goods and services tax.

I have to say that I am proud to have started a filibuster in the finance committee this week to try to stop this committee and this party from seeing to it that no further witness could be heard on that issue.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Shame on you. It is an abuse of the parliamentary process.

**Mr. Langdon:** This government decided that it has heard enough witnesses. It could not take the hundreds of sheets of requests which have come in from groups like the Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, wanting to be able to speak; the Association of Canadian Publishers saying that these committee hearings should not be shut down; or the Okanagan Mainland Real Estate Board. I point out that these are not exactly the usual groups that communicate with the New Democratic Party. But on this issue they saw that we were fighting,