

**Senator Graham:** I thank the Honourable Senator Murray for his usual succinct response, but could he provide more illumination? The rumour mill has been active for several weeks—indeed, for several months.

I might observe in posing my question that Dr. Teresa MacNeil, chairman of Devco, has done yeoman service and provided the community with great leadership in her position as acting president, but has also indicated that that appointment as acting president is up within a matter of days. I understand as well that Dr. MacNeil has indicated that she would not want a continuance or renewal of whatever mandate she was given, which I understand was six months.

Could Senator Murray, against that background, give us a better time frame in which the appointment might be made?

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, let me associate myself and the government fully with the honourable senator's comments about Dr. MacNeil. She has been acting president of Devco for some months now. All along she has been chairman of the board of Devco, is vice-chairman of Enterprise Cape Breton and a member of that board and also was recently confirmed as director of the extension department at St. Francis Xavier University. So she is a busy person. The government is grateful to her for the service that she has rendered to the corporation and the community in this and so many other respects.

All I can tell the honourable senator with regard to the presidency of Devco is that a decision on this matter is imminent.

## EXCISE TAX ACT EXCISE ACT

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Flynn, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Doody, for the second reading of the Bill C-117, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act.—  
(Honourable Senator Buckwold).

**Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold:** Honourable senators, it is my privilege to respond on behalf of this side to the proposal to have this chamber adopt Bill C-117, to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act.

I look across the chamber at Senator Flynn, who proposed this bill in his usual able manner. It is customary to pay tribute to the proposer. I must say that I was rather amused at Senator Flynn as he read the words prepared for him by some propaganda writer in the minister's office.

**Senator MacEachen:** That was in Senator Atkins' office!

**Senator Buckwold:** Those words praised the success of the present government in financial management of the country;

bragged about better Treasury management, pointing out how taxpayers have benefited during the present political regime.

**An Hon. Senator:** False!

**Senator Stanbury:** Twenty-two billion dollars!

**Senator Buckwold:** I can well imagine how he would have reacted—and I refer to Senator Flynn—if I had delivered the same speech from this side. His head would have been shaking negatively, and in his good-natured way he would have interjected time and again with a phrase like, "You must be joking!"

**Senator Flynn:** Why didn't you?

**Senator Stanbury:** He was joking!

**Senator Buckwold:** I took him seriously for a while!

**Senator Flynn:** You did not take me seriously before.

**Senator Buckwold:** Honourable senators, Bill C-117 is a bill which finally brings into law excise tax and sales tax increases that were announced in February 1987, June 1987, December 1987 and February 1988. All of them are already being charged to defenceless taxpayers and our task now is to make them legal. I deplore the long period of time this legislation has taken to be presented. What we have seen is unprecedented taxation by fiat, and not by legislation, brought into law. It is, I might suggest, another form of taxation without representation, a condition fought against for centuries.

● (1420)

I can understand the necessity for short-term delays because of the very nature of the financial implications of tax measures, but surely a serious government would have legitimized these issues long before this, rather than delaying the matter for a period of almost 15 months on important tax measures.

Honourable senators, I believe that this has created an unsatisfactory climate for taxation and, indeed, has created a dangerous precedent. However, honourable senators, we finally have before us Bill C-117, a bill that contains 77 pages. The Ten Commandments, expressing a model moral code for mankind, were written using 297 words. Bill C-117, to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act, has been expressed in 25,000 words.

What does this bill do? It legally codifies a series of taxes already imposed—taxes which will raise billions of dollars—and justifies it by asking the poor Canadian taxpayer to believe that the heavy tax increases are part of a global tax reform program in which the result is fiscally neutral. Honourable senators, I am not sure about "neutral," but in any event that is the phrase I believe the minister used.

They say that personal income taxes will be cut by \$12 billion over the next five years. That cut will be made possible by this additional, retroactive, retrogressive, indirect taxation, plus some increase in corporate taxation. Honourable senators, if you believe that, let me tell you that I have a couple of bridges out in Saskatchewan I can give you a very good buy on.