

Excise Tax Act

in this House of entertaining preconceived ideas based on the language spoken in Saskatchewan or elsewhere.

[*English*]

Mr. Benjamin: Why did you mention signs?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I said that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) mentioned signs. I did not mention them. He told us we are going to have to put up signs to indicate whether taxes are visible or not. The sign of the times is that so long as we have a tax that is hidden from the consumer, we are going to have problems that are a lot more serious than we understand.

As I indicated earlier, we are talking about the potential for abuse by a government. If we continue with the kind of deficits that are being run because of the high interest rate policy, where the cost of servicing the national debt is the equivalent of what our deficit is projected for this year, the potential temptation for going after the Canadian taxpayer as a result of a hidden tax that is being set at 9 per cent is too much to imagine.

With the track record of this Government and how it has broken promise after promise after promise, who can honestly doubt that whenever the crunch comes it will be very easy for the Government to change that sign from 9 per cent to 10 per cent, if in fact anybody looks at it.

I hope government Members will recognize that all of the problems that the Government faces at this time are basically because nobody trusts it. Government may not be able to carry out its stated objectives in good faith because circumstances change, realities change, the economy changes. International factors come into play and interest rates are affected by outside pressures. Many things can happen. Canadians are fair-minded.

They understand those circumstances. However, the Government has preached for several years, printed it in its own materials during the Budget process, a fundamental principle that taxation should be open, and visible. For no other reason than it refuses to pay the political price, that tax is hidden. That is what I believe Canadians will not accept.

We are being asked tonight, just before we break for the summer recess from this House of Commons, to pass a series of changes in the Excise Tax Act that will add a further burden to Canadians.

No one on this side of the House will support that. I hope Canadians will think about the hidden agenda of the Conservative Government with respect to the goods and services tax that will begin at 9 per cent, and will see that it's promise of keeping it at 9 per cent and being revenue neutral will be just another promise to break.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek the unanimous consent of the House to present the first report of our committee which was unanimously adopted this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Crosby): Does the Member have the unanimous consent of the House to present the report?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT—PRESENTATION OF FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment, Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXCISE TAX ACT AND EXCISE ACT MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle that Bill C-20, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act, be read the second time and be referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-20 will increase taxes on practically everything. This Bill on which the Government just placed closure will affect every Canadian family. It will increase the taxes that every person in Canada will have to pay.