

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

REQUEST THAT TAX REBATE DISCOUNTING BE BANNED

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Income tax discounting, lending money against the borrower's expected tax refund, cost Canadian taxpayers \$41 million last year. In view of that fact, will the Minister agree that attempts to regulate this practice are not working and it is time to bring it to an end?

● (1500)

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already answered this question on a previous occasion. We have made this decision following consultations in the best interest of taxpayers, especially those with a small income.

[English]

IMPACT OF DISCOUNTING ON LOW-INCOME TAXPAYERS

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): The Minister's proposal to allow discounters to keep 15 per cent of the refund on the first \$300 means the tax preparers will continue to make their money mainly from the poor. Will the Minister not reconsider that decision, especially since 15 per cent over four to five weeks, annualized, is a rate above what the Criminal Code allows?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I believe we have established a policy which has sensibly and substantially reduced the cost of income tax refund discounting. We allow discounting services, but we continue nevertheless to protect consumers against abuses.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE

NOTICE OF QUESTION RESPECTING INTERJECTION OF MR. MCKENZIE

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett) on a question of privilege.

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, there was an interjection which I believe denied the privileges of every Member of this House. I would like to give notice of a question of privilege on the interjection of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboia and will raise the question of privilege tomorrow after we have all had a chance to read the "blues".

Statements by Ministers

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, my riding is Winnipeg-Assiniboine.

Mr. Broadbent: How did you know whom she was talking about?

Mr. Foster: We all heard you, Dan.

Mr. Axworthy: We don't have to read the "blues" now.

Ms. Jewett: Maybe I don't have to wait.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not quite sure what the Member is proposing to raise later of which she is giving notice. If it is a question of order or a question of language, I may have missed something but—

Mr. Axworthy: We all heard it.

Mr. Gauthier: We all heard it.

Mr. Speaker: —I am perfectly happy to let her bring her case before the House tomorrow.

Ms. Jewett: That is fine, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: She will realize that it may not be a question of privilege, but may in fact be a question of order that should have been brought today.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Oh, it is a question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

TERRORISM

EGYPTIAN AIRLINER HIJACKING—DEATHS OF CANADIANS MOTHER AND SON—STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a statement—

Mr. Speaker: Order! I regret to interrupt the Minister, but I ask Members of the House to have their conversations elsewhere, please, including those who are having them behind the curtains who cannot hear me because they are talking.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a statement on the tragic deaths of a young Canadian mother and her infant son. Although we are awaiting formal identification by the husband and father, our information is that Mrs. Valinda Leonard and her infant son, Andrew, of Beiseker, Alberta, were killed in the hijacking of the Egyptian airliner to Malta. I wish to express my own deepest condolences and those of the Government and of the people of Canada to her family. I also, Sir, want to pay tribute to the manner in which the family has responded to the stress and tragedy of this weekend.