

Ways and Means would be tabled last night, announcing tax changes becoming effective that day. Nevertheless, a motion was tabled. Someone is not telling the truth, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to know why.

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting spectacle. Here we have a tax reform proposal of vital interest to every Canadian and because the Liberal Party is unable to get its act together and, understand its position on this White Paper, all it can do is attack the process and personalities. The respect of Canadians for that Party is slipping very fast.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WHITE PAPER'S EFFECT ON RICH TAXPAYERS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I happen to agree with the issue raised by the Official Opposition, but fundamentally the people of Canada are interested right now in the document presented last night.

In 1984 in the Leaders' debate the Prime Minister promised the people of Canada that if they voted Conservative there would be tax fairness. Last night on television the Minister of Finance admitted that after three years of Conservative Government, and after this paper is implemented, a majority of Canadians will pay more in taxes than when the Conservatives were elected. According to the document itself, Canadians earning \$100,000 or more, 175,000 rich families, will actually pay \$4,365 less. Is this the Conservative concept of justice? After three years of Conservative Government only the rich pay less?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me draw to the attention of the Leader of the NDP that we have to look at what has happened in total since 1984. Some 840,000 jobs have been created. Interest rates are at their lowest level in about 10 years.

Mr. Broadbent: I am talking about tax reform.

Miss MacDonald: Income has something to do with taxes.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The unemployment rate dropped from 11.7 per cent to 9.1 per cent. Job creation over the last 12 months has helped all regions. We have a boom in housing starts which we have not seen for about 10 years. Those are the things that have happened since September 4, 1984, when this Government came into office with this Prime Minister leading the way to a better Canada. That is what we stand for.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the Minister left out one salient fact. There is only one category of Canadian that is richer after three years of Tory Government and it is that group of 175,000 rich families who get a tax break. The rich get richer, that is what happens with the Tories.

Oral Questions

FAIRNESS OF TAX MEASURES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Prime Minister because it is his reliability on the record here. He promised in 1984 a fairer tax system. I ask him the question and will he answer it? Does he think it is fair that after three years of Tory Government the average Canadian should be paying much more, and rich Canadians alone should be paying less? Is that Tory justice?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will give my hon. friend full marks. He has been consistent in his claims in this regard for many years. He has been asking for a greater degree of tax fairness. This has come up in debates in the House over a number of years. This document reduces taxes for eight out of 10 Canadians. Some 90 per cent of Canadians over 65 will pay less taxes. Some 850,000 Canadians will be removed from the federal tax rolls completely. This is an instrument of very considerable fairness for ordinary Canadians.

I ask my hon. friend, if he is disinclined to accept the larger picture of economic growth, to consider the various tax fairness measures introduced on various budget nights by the Minister of Finance, including a minimum tax, tax fairness for the disabled, and so on. I think my hon. friend will agree that this is a continuation of an historic initiative towards tax fairness and equality of opportunity for Canadians. I think it is generally accepted that the prime beneficiaries of these initiatives have been those low-income Canadians who need tax relief most.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The Prime Minister just said 850,000 Canadians were taken off the tax rolls. What he forgot to admit is that during the past three years, because of his Minister's tax policies, 850,000 Canadians were put on the tax rolls.

Miss MacDonald: Those people were unemployed.

Mr. Broadbent: The Government is making up only partially for the injustice it has created. At the same time the truth holds, and it has not yet been denied by the Minister of Finance that the only Canadians paying less taxes after three years of Tory Government are the richest 175,000 families.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT INTRODUCE MINIMUM TAX FOR CORPORATIONS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has been preaching about corporate tax reform for a year and a half now. He has sounded like, if I may use the term, a veritable socialist. Since we have 60,000 corporations, according to the Minister's own documents, that will continue to make profits and not pay taxes, why did he not at least do what Ronald Reagan did—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!