

*Excise Tax Act*

have to make a long distance call to get the doctor—even urgent calls—now there is a PC tax on long distance calls. Also on cable service—you have the cable, you have to pay the 10 per cent PC tax on the cable.

All this adds up, Mr. Speaker, to 27 new taxes or tax increases since 1984. The Conservative Government decreased taxpayers' purchasing power by taking some of the money not from their pay cheques but through hidden indirect taxes and decided to increase taxation of all the consumer goods that you buy, thereby decreasing your purchasing power over and above what they deduct from your pay cheque. The Government would have us believe that they have reduced taxes. It is not true! What happened is they tried to de-index old age security pensions but they had to back down when senior citizens and the Liberal team put the pressure on. And today senior citizens throughout Canada who receive every three months fully indexed old age security payments can thank not the Conservative Party Members but themselves and the Liberal team that worked with them to make the Conservative Government back down. But it is important to remember that it was their intention and that if they came back to power they would do the same thing because their avowed intention at the beginning was to de-index old age security pensions.

In addition, contrary to commitments made by the Prime Minister in the Speech from the Throne, there was the de-indexation of family allowances. This means that the poor get poorer. As the price of goods increases, the inflation rate does the same. By eliminating automatically indexation for the first 3 per cent of inflation, the Government reduced the purchasing power of Canadians. There was also the de-indexation of the personal income tax table and of the spousal exemption, with the result that the purchasing power of Canadian taxpayers has been considerably reduced compared with what it was in 1984. If the Government had maintained full indexation, Canadians would have been able to keep up with the increase in the price of consumer goods and services, and also increase their purchasing power as there would have been an increase in incomes and wages. This means that each time that a worker has been able to obtain a wage increase to improve his purchasing power, either by negotiating a collective agreement through his union or by negotiating alone with his employer, the Conservative Government has reduced this purchasing power by imposing hidden indirect taxes on all goods and services and by de-indexing the income tax tables.

● (1250)

The Government also eliminated another important program which was useful to young couples. If there is one thing that young couples in Canada want, it is to get their own home. This was the purpose of the Registered Home Ownership Plan. Once more, the Government eliminated this program which was of great assistance to young couples who wanted to become homeowners.

The Government imposed a permanent 3 per cent surtax on all taxpayers as well as other taxes, while eliminating exemption programs.

At the same time as it was reducing substantially the purchasing power of taxpayers by imposing indirect taxes and by eliminating tax exemptions and programs which helped low and middle income Canadians, it also implemented measures to help the very wealthy. I would like to quote a few figures about this Government. The \$500,000 capital gains tax exemption cost Canadian taxpayers \$800 million in 1987.

Then, there was the \$1.6 billion paid in financial assistance after the failure of the Western banks. Wealthy Canadians who had deposits of at least \$60,000, as all those who have deposits of less than \$60,000 in a bank are protected by federal legislation, were given additional assistance. These people were not senior citizens with old age security pensions and guaranteed income supplements. They were not fathers with five children to support on \$5 an hour minimum salaries. These people who had over \$60 000 in bank accounts were not single mothers who were paid the \$4.50 minimum wage and who had to pay daycare centres enormous fees to look after their children. They were good friends of the Progressive Conservative Party.

There is also the \$200 million transaction to help the Hong Kong Bank. Then the \$41 million in wasted expenditures when the Government decided to transfer the prison to Port-Cartier. Everybody remembers the scandal the Prime Minister was involved in since he had decided to build a prison in Drummondville, Phase II.

The whole thing was a complex which included Phases I and II. Because he wanted to show his constituents that he was able to deliver the goods, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) simply stole the project which existed in another Tory riding to transfer it to his own. So Canadian taxpayers had to pay \$41 million in additional costs. That is quite a lot of money, \$41 million. With that much money, we could increase the guaranteed income supplement for senior citizens or do a great many other things. We could built in the province of Quebec a lot of social housing to meet the needs of some 15 000 people, including some 400 or 500 who are waiting for affordable housing in my own riding of Montréal—Sainte-Marie. With these \$41 million, we could have built a lot of social housing in various Quebec ridings.

The investigation of the former Regional Industrial Expansion Minister cost \$2.3 million. The Gulf Olympia transaction with the Reichmann brothers which resulted in the Tory Government's decision to close the Gulf refinery in Montreal East cost \$1 billion. Changing the colour of the uniforms cost \$2.7 million, and the whole thing had to be scrapped because the material was unacceptable. It had a sort of "PC" odor; in other words, it stank. Again, it costs \$2.7 million.

Another example of huge waste is the Fantasyland Project in Edmonton West. The Department Officials were saying no. It was out of the question to give money to this project.