

Privilege

Minister for International Trade tabled an offer last March to clarify and strengthen article XI, which means, Mr. Speaker, that our Canadian dairy producers will be protected, all thanks to this government.

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[English]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance.

Now we know that at least five provinces are considering robbing social assistance recipients of the GST tax credit. These poorest of Canadians deserve a clear commitment from this government that they will not have both their pockets picked: one by the federal government with the GST itself and the other by provincial governments robbing them of the tax credit.

Will the government undertake to obtain from the provinces an ironclad guarantee that they will not rob poor Canadians of the GST tax credit?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Minister of Finance and I and others have dealt with this question.

We have said in the past that although we do not have any direct control as to provincial taxation policies, we will take every possible step to encourage provinces not to pursue that objective.

I understand that my hon. friend has received his information from the poll taken by *The Globe and Mail* that five provinces are considering such a move, which of course is wrong because one of the major provinces, the province of British Columbia, has stated quite categorically that there is no such consideration.

If a province—and that is a hypothetical situation—would move in that direction we would take every step to discourage it because we find it to be immoral, improper, if not illegal.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the hon. Lloyd Roseville Crouse, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants on a point of personal privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY—HANTS

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have given you notice of the question of privilege that I intend to raise today. I must say I did not realize I was going to bring the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia up here to help sort things out.

Mr. Speaker: I know the hon. member would not want to draw the representative of the Queen into these very serious matters which he has to raise, but I think hon. members will notice that this is the first time we have ever known what His Honour's middle name really was.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise on this point of privilege. We all know that points of privilege are a little spurious, but it gives me an opportunity to say a few things to help clarify my status as a member in this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker: I have difficulty with points of privilege, but not often does an hon. member start off with suggesting that it may be spurious.

However, given the hon. member's many years in this place, I recognized the hon. member on a point of personal privilege. There is no legal authority, procedural or otherwise, historic or precedential, that allows this. It is just done every once in a while.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I knew it was difficult enough to do, but I did not know it was going to be this difficult to finally get it on.

In a serious vein—and this is a serious moment—there is obviously some sadness in this, if for no other reason than after 25 years I have come full circle. I find myself in the high rises of the backbench of the opposition,