

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs:

That the House do now proceed to Orders of the Day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT

The House resumed from June 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act, the Excise Act and the Income Tax Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): When Bill C-32 was last before the House, the hon. member for St. Albert had 15 minutes remaining for debate.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise again to talk on Bill C-32 and since it was yesterday that I was talking last on the bill perhaps I should give a little bit of a recap of what I was saying for the benefit of members opposite.

I was saying that a nation is not a nation if it cannot defend its borders and enforce its laws. What we saw this past winter was a situation in which this great and wonderful country of ours allowed its borders to be used illegally. They refused to defend them while in many situations there were millions, even billions of dollars being smuggled into this country.

The abuse of our borders and the unwillingness of this government to defend its own borders was a disgrace to Canada.

The smuggling was largely through certain reserves that straddled the border between Canada and the United States and that was what we called, as far as I understand, a no-go zone for the RCMP.

This government even refused to send in the police to bring under control and under the Canadian jurisdiction the laws of this land while they were being blatantly abused and ignored by people in that area.

We could watch on evening television—and this was not Bosnia or Belfast, it was right here at our own border—while skidoos and boats were crossing the St. Lawrence River, bringing smuggled contraband into this country. We could hear the bullets and the guns going off. You would think you were in a war zone.

We sometimes even heard the people on television saying that if the government sends in the RCMP it will be war on our very own borders. That is another shame on Canada. We had one here last night when democracy was denied in the House. Here we have in our country the RCMP not going in to defend the laws of the land or to defend the borders. Not only was that an insult to Canada but, to add insult to injury, these cigarettes were being exported legally by manufacturers in Canada. They were fully aware that 70 per cent of all cigarettes they were exporting were coming back across the border illegally. The government was fully aware of that. Yet it waited until the situation reached a crisis point before it did anything about it.

• (1700)

These manufacturers were willing co-conspirators in the smuggling situation. By exporting them they were not losing their market. They were fuelling their market. They were increasing their market. They knew the cigarettes that were being exported to the United States were coming back in here and were being sold here for less than half the regular price in a store because of the high taxation applied by this country.

As a result of the lower price more and more people were smoking. As I said they were willing co-conspirators in this game where Canada was being bilked of billions of dollars, where our laws were being ignored, and where our borders were being trampled on by people who had no thought, care or respect for our great country. The manufacturers, the exporters, the brokers and the truckers were all working legally but with full knowledge that the end product was illegal, denying tax revenues to the government and putting the jobs and well-being of the country at risk.

We have laws in this land to protect our society. Finally the government acted. It introduced the measures last February which we now know as Bill C-32. At that time it reduced the