

Inquiries of the Ministry

government getting involved in a relationship between the vendor and the purchaser.

Mr. Hales: May I ask a supplementary question. Does the Minister of National Revenue realize the Minister of Finance just told us this is what we should do?

[Later:]

Mr. Lawrence E. Kindt (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I should like to come back to the Minister of National Revenue for clarification. Have I understood it properly that the only position this government takes in relation to the ultimate consumer of goods in the recovery of the tax is caveat emptor, or let the buyer beware? Has the government no other solution for them to recover it?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister of National Revenue could give some consideration to the various questions that have been asked here today. On the basis of a rough computation it means that the wholesalers will have collected about \$350,000 a day more than the tax will now be. Will he not do something to bring about an arrangement with the wholesalers whereby refunds will be made? Otherwise it is going to be a tremendous windfall to the wholesalers in this country.

Mr. Pearson: What about the surcharges?

Mr. Garland: Mr. Speaker, there is no justification for accepting the position which the right hon. Leader of the Opposition has just indicated. There is no justification whatsoever, and on that basis there will be no reply.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I know the minister is not required to answer, but in what respect is there not justification, leaving in the hands of the wholesalers—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have been howled down before.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. It is that there was another item of business set down for debate this afternoon, and it seems to me that if the question period is to be turned into a debate we will never reach the orders of the day—

Mr. Churchill: Grit closure.

Mr. Pickersgill: —and that the rules with respect to questions should apply equally to all hon. members of the house, however eminent.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There can only be a debate when there are two sides to a question. In this case the government is refusing to take action, which means that the wholesalers of this country will be able—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: —to have collected—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I won't be howled down again.

Mr. Chevrier: You have howled down everybody else.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The wholesalers of the country will have collected the difference between 11 per cent and 4 per cent, which amounts to about \$350,000 a day collected on behalf of the federal government. The government has now changed its attitude, and surely the minister will say that something is going to be done in order to arrange for refunds, as suggested by the opposition?

Mr. Garland: I simply answer by saying that I do not for a moment accept the assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. McIntosh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer back to the answer I got from the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Would the house leader say his reply did not agitate debate?

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I suggest that we make a little progress now.

(Translation):

[Later:]

Mr. Chapdelaine: Mr. Speaker, in view of the answers given us by the Minister of National Revenue and also in view of the requests we have been receiving regularly for a few days, that is where to go to be reimbursed for the tax paid, I should like to ask the Minister of National Revenue if he can tell us how he will reconcile, in the province of Quebec, the fact that when a consumer has paid the tax he will have to ask to be reimbursed—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Chapdelaine: —by the retailer, the retailer will have to call on the wholesaler as a guarantee—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is the same thing—

Mr. Chapdelaine: —the wholesaler will have to call on the manufacturer as a guarantee and the manufacturer will have to claim—

Some hon. Members: Order.