

he make? Some provinces have stayed out of it, and there must be a reason for them to want to get back into it.

Mr. Chrétien: The hon. member can address his questions to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources tomorrow. I must say I should like to get agreement to this clause quickly. After all, we are on the verge of completing our fourth week of debate on a bill of 160 clauses, and we have reached clause six. We have a long way to go.

Mr. Epp: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I have a fair amount of respect for the minister but I do not think he would wish to give an incorrect impression of what I was saying. What I said to the minister was that I would support him in whatever cut he was willing to make to reduce the present 43 per cent of the GNP which represents public spending. I also said there were many ways in which government spending could be reduced.

An hon. Member: Where?

Mr. Epp: If the hon. member for St. Catharines had been in the committee today and had seen some of the things we spent money on and some of the estimates of the Secretary of State, he would have blushed with shame. I say to the Minister of Finance: Spend money wisely; spend money on projects such as insulation which will enable us to reduce energy consumption and improve the balance of payments. That is the way to go; cut back on programs which are of little or no value.

Mr. Chrétien: I was merely pointing out that if the committee were to adopt the amendment of the hon. member for St. John's West and make these grants not taxable over a period of seven years, it would cost the treasury \$560 million. People can make their own judgment.

Mr. Paproski: The Minister of Finance is trying to convey the impression that he never speaks to the Minister of Energy. I do not see why we should vote on the amendment at this time when the minister cannot tell us what the deal was with Alberta. It is important that we should know. Surely he knew what was happening at that conference.

Mr. Chrétien: I have great confidence in the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and I am very pleased he was able to make a deal with the two provinces which were not included in the program. I must admit I was not there during the negotiations. Apparently, though, an agreement was reached and I am pleased about it. I am sure my colleague did not go beyond his mandate; I know what it was. I hope the hon. member will not vote in favour of an amendment which will cost more than \$500 million. Perhaps he should go and help the Eskimos of Edmonton to play a little football.

Mr. Paproski: I want to ask the minister this: what was that mandate? He will not tell me what the mandate was. He does not know what the mandate was. Maybe Alberta is going to save money for the treasury. The minister is not telling us the truth. I am surprised that the minister should stand there and talk about something he doesn't know.

Income Tax

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Chairman, is the only way to get the floor here by rising on a point of order?

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Broadview.

Mr. Gilbert: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. He has told us it will cost \$560 million if we accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for St. John's West. May I remind him that that amount would be spread over a period of seven years, which would mean \$80 million a year, or less. In the interest of establishing the principle of fairness and equity in all provinces, rather than just two at the moment, would the Minister of Finance say that this is an unreasonable amount to pay?

● (2042)

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, there is a very funny atmosphere here. The suggestion appears to be, "What's \$80 million a year?"

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Chairman, I have a very simple observation to make to an otherwise generally intelligent individual. I think that the Chamber, or those in it who are listening to the minister, would reject the sophistry of the position he has been taking in the last 20 minutes, and I think he is aware of that. I would commend to the minister some reading as to why we have a Canada today, such as that by Joe Howe. I would also remind him that he knows precisely what is the position of the opposition in this regard, and I suggest he review his Canadian history. Or is he so narrow minded that he only reads some other histories of Canada?

I say to the minister, don't use that argument unless you want to be divisive in this country. I have watched him and some of his colleagues debate and argue in this Chamber for 10 or 12 years, and I am accusing him of sophistry in the casual, offhanded manner in which he rejected a serious amendment. The minister knows exactly what I am talking about. Nova Scotians and Prince Edward Islanders do not want to be accused of being alone in this nation. Don't stand there and tell me half truths, Mr. Minister, tongue in cheek; because you know differently. Do not ever let me privately believe that you are capable of going to such an extent with respect to a serious amendment to your proposal.

Mr. Chrétien: I want the hon. member to know that the first program was designed to assist two provinces in Confederation which rely almost absolutely on imported oil for their energy. The energy crisis hit those two provinces more than any others. The federal government designed a special program to aid people in this land who were worse hit by the cost of oil than others. Those two provinces were more dependent on oil, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We tried to find a solution that would give the people in those two provinces assistance, since unfortunately they were the victims of the increase in the price of imported oil.

We were aware that this might create some resentment. It was not an easy thing to do. I am a member from Quebec and this did not assist my province. As I recall it, I was President