

Government Orders

My question to him is how does what the Conservatives are doing now differ so dramatically from what the Liberals did in 1972 when they created the shelter that is being extended by the Conservatives today?

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, today I am wearing my very special suit. It has a pocket in here and a pocket in here. I call it my NDP suit.

You see, if I want to be against Hibernia I put my position in this pocket. If I want to be for Hibernia, I put it in this pocket. That is how they treated Hibernia. That is how they treated most other subjects.

My friend from Windsor—St. Clair, one of the acolytes in the “McLaugh-in” economic choir, that funny money choir you heard singing last week, has the audacity to get up and talk about somebody with two positions on an issue. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. You talk about it.

I could take him through a dozen examples in this House where that party has been on both sides of every issue, where everybody in that party should wear a suit like this with at least two pockets.

The member asked a question and he will get the answer to his question. I tell the acolyte in the “McLaugh-in” economic choir that he will get his answer. I gave the answer in my speech. I said yes. In 1972 it is true the government—

Mr. McCurdy: Now you have changed your mind.

Mr. Simmons: Now he says I have changed my mind. Does he not know that yelling by itself does not mean much unless you are saying something. Does he not know that?

I said in my speech about 15 minutes ago and made reference to the fact that this was brought in in 1972. There are two things. One, I said I thought 21 years was enough to allow these people, the Bronfmans, and the rest, to get their house in order. Two, I say to him that neither I nor he were here in 1972. Do I take responsibility for everything that happened decades ago? No.

• (1215)

I will tell him this and he had better be governed by the same principle. While I am here in 1993, if I see something that is wrong, I will get up and say so, whether or not somebody in my party did it or somebody in somebody else's party did it.

This whole idea of my party, right or wrong, is an NDP idea. It is not a Liberal idea. It is an NDP thing. He should not get trapped into it because if he does, he is going to have to be in Newfoundland telling the people that he is for Hibernia, but when he goes to Toronto he is going to have to tell the people that he is against Hibernia like his leader has done on several occasions.

He should make up his mind whether he is going to preserve the credibility that he is known for or whether he is going to say my party right or wrong. If he does the latter, he is on a very sticky wicket.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Madam Speaker, I have a question and a short comment.

Since 1972 and even prior, the political party that voted against the great budgets of Allan MacEachen which closed every loophole and even more, the great budgets that were presented by Liberal administrations and the great tax changes that cannot be denied by anybody because it is a part of our history, were opposed by the NDP and the Tories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Baker: It was the Liberal government that brought in the closures of the loopholes that they now so vehemently brag about.

Let me ask a question of my—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Just a moment. My ears have been asking my head, where are we? Are we in a school yard or in the House of Commons? The hon. member will put his question.

Mr. Baker: Madam Speaker, exactly. The NDP member from Windsor who spoke should stick around because I am going to tell him the historical facts on tax changes in about 45 minutes. I have now decided to have a few words to say in this debate because of what he just said concerning the NDP and the Liberals.

I want to ask the hon. member for Burin—St. George's if he has any opinion at this moment in time regarding the fact that the number of people making over \$200,000 a year, as reported on their income tax returns, and who pay zero income tax in this country has doubled? According to the latest figures from Statistics Canada, the numbers have doubled on their reported gross earnings on their income tax returns year over year from 1988, 1989 and 1990.