

Mr. Rompkey: Let me say, first of all, for the benefit of the members of the Armed Forces who are in the gallery, I repeat what was said in this House last week, that there will be no tax applied to the travel of Armed Forces personnel.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: What about their dependants?

Mr. Rompkey: Madam Speaker, we have said that we are not going after the nickels, dimes and pennies. There are a lot of unpaid taxes which we should be collecting, but not from people who cannot afford to pay it.

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Rompkey: The question of the hon. member was in that category. We will not be taxing parking lot benefits or applying tax to retail clerk discounts. There is a whole range of benefits all across the country, and I have not the time in question period to go into all of it.

An hon. Member: Give us a list.

Mr. Rompkey: These things will be clarified. The general guideline will be that we will not be going after nickels and dimes. We will be taxing those people who should bear a fairer share of the tax burden in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POLAND—SAFETY OF CANADIAN NATIONALS

Mr. Louis R. Desmarais (Dollard): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I understand that an official in External Affairs refuses to inquire into the well-being of Canadians presently visiting Poland. A constituent who was worried about his wife now visiting relatives in Poland was advised by this official that he felt it unnecessary to check the status of Canadians now in Poland through our embassy there. Will the minister give us the assurance that his department will make the necessary inquiries to ensure that all Canadians now in Poland will return to Canada safely?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that we will be most happy to take the names of any Canadians in Poland from their relatives here and do our best to ascertain their whereabouts and safety. I am sure that the hon. member's constituent must have misunderstood what he was told. It was my understanding, as I stated in my answer to the hon. member for St. John's West, that we do not have the ability at the present time to make that kind of investigation since we have been denied communication with our embassy by the Polish government. We are asking to have communications

restored and, as soon as they are, we will be prepared to undertake that task.

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INCOME TAX

REQUEST THAT POLICY ON EMPLOYEE BENEFITS BE TABLED

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a question supplementary to that of my hon. friend from Waterloo. The Minister of National Revenue has now indicated that the government has a detailed policy regarding who will be affected and who will not be affected by the tax on employee benefits which was announced by his colleague, the Minister of Finance. Since the minister has that detailed policy, surely he must accept that it is not appropriate to this House to have a minister announcing tax policies in bits and pieces on the floor of the House of Commons, as he chooses.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: If the minister has a detailed policy, as he has just stated he does, will he give us a commitment that he will table that policy today in the House and, if he will not do that, will he tell us why he is denying specific information about which individuals will be taxed under the provisions of the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance the other day? Will he explain that to the people and to the Parliament of Canada?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, what I was attempting to do was to indicate an approach and to use examples in line with the question which had been asked about what approach would be taken. The Department of National Revenue is an interpretive department which interprets the Income Tax Act. There is a range of hundreds, maybe thousands of benefits across the country, in various amounts and sizes. I do not think it is appropriate to deal with them during question period.

An hon. Member: Table them.

Mr. Rompkey: If hon. members want to they can put specific questions on the Order Paper, but what I am doing is indicating an approach. We are trying to assess how benefits are given all across the country and, indeed, how the law should be applied. I have tried to make it clear, to some degree, and we will be making further clarifications in the days ahead.

● (1500)

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, this is incredible. This government has a responsibility to tell the people of Canada not about an approach to tax policy which can literally cripple hundreds of thousands of Canadians across the country. The minister is not here for an approach. He is here for a policy. The Minister of Finance, now absent, announced a policy—