

Excise Tax Act

child allowance very substantially. I do not mean by only a dollar or two the way this Government might have done, but by something like \$35 a week in New Zealand dollars which meant that there was a substantial increase in what the average family would receive for their kids compared to the levels of family allowance in this country which are unfortunately too low.

The Government of New Zealand took all of those measures together and at the same time reduced the rate of personal tax for people on middle incomes. It moved at all of those levels at once. We were surprised and very interested in the fact that far from being opposed to that particular tax, there was a substantial amount of support for it because people felt that the Labour Government of New Zealand had acted fairly in the way in which it introduced that tax.

On top of that, it put a great deal of energy and effort into explaining how that tax worked, in showing how it was fair, and in showing how it overcame some of the weaknesses in the existing manufacturers' sales tax which we have in Canada or equivalent excise taxes which were applied on an *ad hoc* basis to different commodities and goods which had previously existed in New Zealand.

It reached the point that the chairman of our committee, the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn), was stating publicly in the press in New Zealand—and I am sorry that he has not yet said it here in Canada—how he wished that Canada could have had Roger Douglas as Minister of Finance. A man like Mr. Douglas, he said, would make a fine Minister of Finance in any country in the developed world. I presume that he meant Canada as well. I am not sure if that was a vote of non-confidence in our present Minister of Finance, but it certainly made me think about the fact that we have a Minister of Finance who looks as though he is about to step into a telephone booth to strip off his clothes and become Superman, only he can never get the door of the telephone booth open.

It was very interesting to go to another country and see what happens when you have a dynamic, a radical, and a somewhat progressive Minister of Finance. I did not agree with all of his measures. I was a bit surprised by some of them. Things seemed a little bit upside down down under from time to time in certain measures implemented by our colleagues in Socialists International in the Labour Party in New Zealand. Nonetheless, there was a dynamic and coherent idea of what should be done and the ability and political will to put it into force.

We are patching together this system despite the fact that the current system has enormous weaknesses. As my colleague from Regina pointed out in debating this Bill just a few days ago, the burden is different on different commodities, the burden is different with the manufactures' sales tax which we have right now depending on what kind of goods and trade channels it passes through. We tax production goods and, therefore, discriminate against Canada's exports, not only to

the United States but to every country in the world. We also discriminate in favour of imports because importers get a better deal. While that may change a little bit with the patching job which is being proposed to the committee right now, that is nonetheless a problem which remains. In addition, the system is unreasonably complex, particularly for smaller manufacturers and small businesses.

This tax is making Canadians pay for the free trade arrangement. The Government could in fact have applied the same political will, the same amount of energy, to putting into place a stage-two revision which would have been radical and important while at the same time bringing in measures to alleviate the impact on Canadians who are on modest or low incomes, not \$50, not \$70, but a substantial tax credit to persons who are on very low incomes. Unfortunately, that was not done. I regret that because I think the Government could have moved in that particular area.

I want to conclude by making a comment about comments made by Mr. Robert Campeau this week. I tried to raise this in Question Period but was unable to because of other issues which were also important. Mr. Campeau attacked the federal Government for spending too much on social programs and specifically argued that Canada's medicare program is a mistake.

• (1630)

I wanted to raise this because we had established that the Campeau Corporation has not paid a nickel of federal income tax in Canada since 1980 on some \$300 million of Canadian profits. There is something wrong when a free-loader like Mr. Campeau turns around and criticizes the Canadian Government for having social programs that are excessive.

If he wants to criticize the Government, he and his corporation should be contributing to the cost of taxpayers. I think it is time we had a minimum corporate tax of 20 per cent in this country so that people like Robert Campeau make a real contribution to the country rather than constantly bringing it down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I simply want to bring to the attention of the Hon. Member that I gave him an extra three minutes.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that you gave the Hon. Member extra time. I assume that can be taken off questions and comments.

I do not know whether the Member had an opportunity to finish with respect to Robert Campeau. Personally, I was shocked when I heard this. I am quite concerned because Mr. Campeau is a big Liberal fish who got a lot of patronage and money. As a matter of fact, in Ottawa they do not call the place across the way Place du Portage but Place de Patronage. That is because he received so much money.

He is a great friend of Trudeau and was at the Trudeau dinner the other night. Did this fellow and his corporation that