

Excise Tax Act

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): You have a more co-operative Opposition.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order since the Government has indicated its plan for the next number of days. I agree with the Deputy House Leader that in fact the House has been productive considering that 180 Bills have been passed. There is a clear explanation for that success. It is the willingness on all sides of the House to co-operate and to facilitate the business of the House.

I want to say that that element of co-operation is led by the Government. If the Government is prepared to co-operate then the opposition Parties are inclined to co-operate. We are then able to conduct the House of Commons in a business-like way.

What we have seen in the committee examining the western diversification office is not co-operation. I am sending a very clear signal to the Deputy House Leader. If that is the way the Government will lead, allowing that type of skulduggery to take place in terms of procedure in committees, then there will be little inclination on our part to be co-operative.

The Minister knows, as does the Whip for the Official Opposition, that this place works when we co-operate. The type of situation in the committee does not indicate good faith in terms of a willingness to respect views and the concerns of the opposition Members but simply to bulldoze ahead. This place cannot work under those circumstances.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. friend's comments. We will certainly do our best to co-operate. I appreciate that in view of today's news he is under a bit of stress. I repeat, we will do our best to co-operate.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister a question. In doing so I am not asking for a fixed figure, but can he give some indication, whether it be in terms of the number of days or the number of weeks, before the Government will finish the drafting and be prepared to present for first reading the Bill to privatize Air Canada? I ask this question in light of the large amount of interest that there is in the matter and because of my particular responsibilities in my Party.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a reading on that at this time. However, I will make the inquiries for my hon. friend to see if I can get some sort of reading as to when that Bill might come forward.

Mr. Benjamin: On a further point, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister this. From my reading of his response to the Whip of the Official Opposition and to my colleague, our House Leader, is it in the cards that we will be called back to sit during the summer?

Mr. Speaker: I wish to assure Hon. Members on the government side that the Speaker has nothing to say.

Mr. Lewis: My hon. friend will know that we work to a parliamentary calendar and that we came back early last summer because of the emergency refugee legislation which, unfortunately, is still delayed in the Senate by Liberal Senators. Barring any unforeseen emergency I think my hon. friend will have his normal summer—perhaps an abnormal summer—but it will not involve parliamentary proceedings.

Mr. Gauthier: I have one final point, Mr. Speaker. In the interests of good management will the Minister share with us next Thursday what the priorities of the Government are so that Canadians and the House can operate more efficiently and perhaps even get the program of the Government in the works? He has a whole week in which to ask the various Ministers what their priorities are.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, we will certainly take a look at the matter. If my hon. friend will provide me with the travel plans of his official spokespersons—

Mr. Gauthier: There are no travel plans and you know it.

Mr. Lewis: —we could then co-ordinate government business with the time parameters of members of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I gave notice before Easter that there will be no travel by members of this caucus between Easter and the end of June. I have no control over trips that were approved previously. I gave the Minister notice before Easter and I give it to him now. I will not give consent to trips.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government House Leader to help some of us, for example, myself, our Party's critic for communications and culture. Is the film distribution legislation a priority for the Government? If not, will the Government say that? If it is, will it tell us when it will be brought in?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there are several items that the Government has on its agenda. We are proceeding to review them and to draft the appropriate legislation. As soon as that legislation is ready to be introduced, I am sure that my hon. friend will be among the first to know.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Tuesday, March 29, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-117, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.