

Excise Tax

question will have to be put on motions Nos. 25 and 26 separately.

Motions Nos. 27 and 28 could be grouped for debate and a vote on motion No. 27 will dispose of motion No. 28.

Motions Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 35 will be debated separately and voted on separately.

Motions Nos. 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43 could be grouped for debate, with the question being put on motion No. 36. An affirmative vote on this motion would dispose of motions Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43. Motions Nos. 40, 41, 42 and 43 seem to be consequential and hinge on the fact that motion No. 36 will carry in the affirmative.

However, in the Chair's opinion, should motion No. 36 be negated, then the question on motions Nos. 40, 41, 42 and 43 is not necessary, including the putting of the question on motion No. 37 which is identical to motion No. 36. This leaves the putting of the question on motions Nos. 38 and 39 separately.

Motion No. 44 will be debated separately and voted on separately.

This is the suggestion that the Chair would like to make at this point. This being a complex bill, as indicated by the number of motions proposed by hon. members, the Chair would welcome any suggestions hon. members may have in order to facilitate further consideration of the bill.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you will recall, motions Nos. 8, 13 and 58 deal with a particular provision of this very complex bill, namely the quarterly indexation of taxes on spirits and tobacco. There is on the Order Paper an amendment to have this quarterly indexation become semi-annual. The committee has received representations from the industry and the provincial boards to have annual indexation. To introduce an amendment providing for annual indexation, I would need the authorization and the agreement of the House to table two ways and means motions, one concerning the Excise Act and the other concerning the Excise Tax Act, and I would also need the leave of the House to table the amendments related to these two notices of a ways and means motion to adjust the indexation from quarterly to annual. If I had the unanimous consent, I would proceed in this way, Madam Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I have had consultations with members on this side, and while we are not at all happy with indexing, we are quite prepared to have the minister do what he can to improve what we say is a bad bill. This might be some improvement. It certainly is not the kind of thing that we would like to see happen, but we would certainly give unanimous consent to allow the minister to file what may be an improvement over what is already there.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Madam Speaker, with the greatest respect, may I say that I fail to see the necessity of the move, using ordinary common sense. Unless there is a difference in the incidence of tax, which the minister has not indicated in his remarks this afternoon is the case, how can he possibly justify this request? What the bill calls for is quarterly indexing, which is in effect quarterly compounding. The minister proposes to move to a yearly basis. My fundamental mathematics tells me that quarterly compounding yields a greater result than annual compounding. Therefore, since it is not an increase in the incidence of tax in the sense that the minister wishes to present, and it is open to any hon. member including a government minister to move for a reduction in tax without notice, I fail to see why it is necessary to obtain the consent of the House, first, to the tabling of a ways and means motion, and second, why there need be consent of the House. As a matter of fact, I think at the time the minister is discussing his subamendment, his amendment of six months which is already on the Order Paper, he could move to change it to one year by way of an amendment to an amendment. I fail to see how this is necessary procedurally.

Now, it may be alleged that annual compounding or indexing annually will yield a greater result. I still have not been able to resolve that and there is no proof of that, merely the fact that it has been said. I want to make sure that that is so. I am not objecting to the proposed change, but, as I say, I do not think it is necessary procedurally.

[Translation]

Mr. Bussières: Madam Speaker, the experts of the taxation division of the department inform me that a change from a quarterly indexation to an annual indexation exceeds the scope of the original ways and means notice of motion, so that we would need to have a second ways and means notice of motion for the amendments to be consistent with the ways and means motion, which would not be the case since the extension, if I may call it that, of the original ways and means motion, would not allow us to move an amendment to have annual indexation, but only semi-annual indexation.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

● (1540)

[English]

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I wonder if it would be appropriate to defer for a moment discussion as to the consent. I would like to take a look at the actual text of the amendment. If I may have a copy of it, it would be helpful. We could return to it a little later in order to see the matter dealt with. If that is agreeable to the Chair, I think it would expedite the business.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: As I understand it, the hon. members of the opposition are not clear as to whether the motion that the hon. minister wants to move is made necessary by the fact that