

Excise Tax Act

our inshore fishermen and does not care about negotiations because it is bigger, more powerful and more significant on the international stage than Canada? Why are we taxing ordinary Canadian families to give bushels of money to a country that is pushing us around when it comes to the fishery? Fundamentally I do not think the Government can justify the tax increase on ordinary Canadians by \$1,500 over the last three years. I do not think the Government can justify that, given the priorities it has established on spending and given the fact that the Government wants to use so much of this money to purchase nuclear submarines. I believe the majority of Canadians would reject this nuclear program out of hand. It is a program about which Canadians have not been consulted in any effective way. If they were, I am sure they would say no to it. The Government is wasting money when it comes to expenditures. Money could be saved and the Government could take a more modest and yet effective approach to them.

The Government is allowing revenues to go uncollected. The Government is allowing a whole series of tax write-offs to continue to exist for which there is no documentation. Billions of dollars of revenues are flowing away. A recent study was done by an economist from, I believe, Newfoundland in which he indicated that for every dollar of tax revenue that is given up only 21 cents of new investment is generated. That raises the question of the effectiveness of tax write-offs when only 21 cents of investment is generated each time a dollar is spent. That does not sound like a very economical approach to me because every time you go down that road you lose money.

The legislation before the House today to amend the Excise Tax Act is a series of tax increases. It is from a number of Budgets, a couple of which have been called tax reform papers, but when it comes down to it what tax reform means to Tories is tax increases. The burden on the ordinary Canadian family has increased over the last few years since the Conservative Government has taken office and this legislation is implementing that policy. There is no way you can justify tax increases without first indicating that everyone is paying his or her fair share. We know that profitable corporations in Canada are getting away with paying no taxes. Corporations that make profits and pay no taxes end up getting tax credits and are walking away with the money of ordinary Canadian families. That is unfair. It has to stop and the way to do it is to throw those chaps on that side of the House out of office. That will happen in short order, just as soon as the Prime Minister gets up enough courage to call the next election.

● (1550)

I wish that the Conservative Government would own up to the fact that when it says tax reform, it means tax increases. At least then it would have the virtue of honesty and frankness. It should back away from the policy and give some tax relief to ordinary Canadian families.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, I wonder if I could pose a short question to my hon. friend. He railed on about taxes and tax increases. Yet his Party, in supporting the National Energy

Program, supported the biggest tax transfer from western Canada to Ottawa ever perpetrated on any region of this country in the history of Canada. I wonder how he can square that.

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, my understanding of the facts is that we voted against the National Energy Program. The Hon. Member should acknowledge that rather than try to lay on the New Democratic Party the sins of the Liberal Party.

At the same time, I want to challenge the Hon. Member to live with today rather than with the past. Will he explain to the House how he can justify the fact that his Government has increased the tax burden on ordinary Canadian families at the same time as it leaves profitable corporations paying no taxes whatsoever? How can he justify those tax increases while giving a free ride to profitable corporations?

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, it is true that the NDP did vote against the National Energy Program, but I would refer my hon. friend to House of Commons *Debates* of October 23, 1981, when the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) who was the energy critic for the NDP said:

Today I want to begin the debate on the Canadianization parts of Bill C-48. These clauses of the bill lie at the heart of the National Energy Program. They are the ones under a barrage of unparalleled criticism from our American friends.

I want to tell the government on behalf of our party, and indirectly the United States government, that the objectives of the National Energy Program will get our support, and I think public support, provided the legislation is tightened up to fully reflect that . . .

I regret to say there has been evidence in the last few days that the Canadian government is backing off the National Energy Program and its objectives under American pressure.

It is obvious that although the NDP did vote against the National Energy Program, it was not because NDP Members disagreed with it but because the Liberal Government, they said, was not going far enough. How does he square that or what does he mean by that?

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, I am glad that my hon. colleague acknowledged the fact that this Party voted against the National Energy Program. After he did that, my hon. colleague engaged in a time-honoured parliamentary ploy which is to take a speech from many years ago, find a quote and seek to embarrass someone. We see that going on in the House every day. Someone on this side reads a statement of a Minister on that side made when he or she was in Opposition, someone on that side reads what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) said when he was in such and such a position. This goes on all the time.

While the Hon. Member is engaging in this game, I will point out one thing about the quote that he read to me, and that is, that the quote was qualified. There was a specific reference to the phrase "provided that". Obviously when my hon. colleague was speaking at that time, there were some conditions attached to what he was saying. I do not claim to