

FINANCE

APPLICATION OF SALES TAX TO NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the application of the sales tax now being applied for the first time to non-prescription drugs, which was announced in the Budget last spring, has created real hardship for thousands of people in Canada, but particularly for two groups of people—our retired people, the seniors, who frequently need to purchase drug items such as aspirin, cough remedies, antacids and laxatives, and mothers with young children, who make frequent and regular purchases of items such as cough and cold remedies, baby aspirin, baby oil and powder, and vitamins.

We are told by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) that he had to do these things because he has to deal with the record deficit. At the same time as he puts this tax on people who really cannot afford to pay the increased cost, he has increased the benefits to people in the highest income brackets through the \$500,000 exemption for capital gains, through the increased reduction of income taxes, and so on.

I call on the Minister of Finance, who has been able to reduce taxes for those upper income Canadians by several billions of dollars, to remove this new sales tax which he has applied to non-prescription drugs and which is having such adverse effects on so many Canadians in the low and middle-income brackets.

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[Translation]

THE LIBERAL PARTY

BEHAVIOUR OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) leave much to be desired. It is too bad he ignored the advice of the editor of the newspaper *Le Devoir*, Jean-Louis Roy, who wrote on September 16th: "It is time for the Liberal Leader to go beyond the level of crassly partisan speeches in the House and set forth his vision of what this country needs."

Mr. Speaker, it is doubly unfortunate that the Leader of the Official Opposition has failed to take advantage of this opportunity to moderate his comments.

Instead of taking the very apt advice offered by Mr. Roy, the Leader of the Opposition has preferred to make countless unfounded comments and accusations. The inordinate and excessive charges he made involving the Prime Minister, the Governor of the Bank of Canada and Canadian bankers have had the effect of seriously harming the financial institutions of this country.

Now that many of his statements have been contradicted by officials in the United States and by presidents of Canadian banks, he owes the House an explanation. The House of

S.O. 22

Commons is neither a neighbourhood bar nor a businessmen's club: it is the public forum of this country.

Unless he wants to be branded as irresponsible, the Leader of the Opposition ought to take this opportunity to give the House and this country the explanations to which they are entitled.

Fortunately, Canadians are not fooled by the Opposition's accusations. Look at this morning's polls—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has expired.

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● (1410)

[English]

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, early this week the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) claimed the Canadian Commercial Bank transferred all its good assets and good loans worth \$300 million to its California subsidiary between the time it received a cease and desist order from the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco and the time it came before the Inspector General of Banks.

This claim has been repudiated.

David Scott, the Deputy Superintendent of the State Banking Department in Los Angeles, is quoted as saying the U.S. Federal Reserve Board did not warn the CCB of a pending cease and desist order in February. Mr. Scott is also quoted as saying there was no flow of \$300 million from the CCB to its California subsidiary. I talked to Mr. Scott today and he confirmed the accuracy of the report in an Ottawa newspaper.

On Tuesday the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister if he knew about this transfer of funds. On Thursday we ask the Leader of the Opposition: Did he know about it? Did he look for evidence before making his allegation?

It is because I have a real and profound respect for the Leader of the Opposition, perhaps more than some of his Members do, that I now urge him to return to this subject today, present the evidence he has to support his claims, if he has it, and, if not, withdraw his remarks.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH REFUGEES DETAINED

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of Canadians to the intolerable situation prevailing at the Ville Saint-Laurent Detention Centre for refugees in Montreal. Yesterday, detainees who were on a hunger strike were involved in a fight with security guards, and one refugee was wounded.