

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will give permission for an emergency debate on this matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Algoma has raised a matter of serious concern, especially to part of the country, and I think also to hon. members of this House.

However, I think perhaps the hon. member may be able to make representations in the coming days. In the meantime I do not think it is appropriate to accept the motion.

I thank the hon. member for raising the matter. It is an important matter.

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I also rise pursuant to Standing Order 52 to request permission to put down a motion to adjourn the House to discuss the matter of the deepening crisis in the Atlantic fishery. I am aware—

Mr. Speaker: My concern is that, for whatever reason, and the fault may lie with me, I do not seem to have any notice of the hon. member's application.

Can the hon. member help me with respect to the question of notice?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I wrote on January 25. I would be happy to furnish the Chair with a copy of the letter.

Mr. Speaker: If I understand, notice was given a day or so ago. I wonder if I could ask the hon. member under the circumstances if he could consider his position tonight and if he is so disposed perhaps give me notice in the morning when I can deal with the matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-62, an Act to Amend the Excise Tax Act, the Criminal Code, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Statistics Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act, be read the second

time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with a strong sense of accomplishment that I stand today to open this debate on the goods and services tax, accomplishment because with this bill we have succeeded where no previous government has in putting together a comprehensive, balanced and fair reform of the federal sales tax system. This is indeed a milestone for Canada. With this bill we have finally moved from rhetoric to action in reforming our antiquated and seriously-flawed federal sales tax.

We are proposing to establish a federal sales tax system which will strengthen the economy and improve the fairness of the tax system. Canadians have been discussing, analysing and proposing alternatives to the existing federal sales tax for half a century. Royal commissions and committees have all documented the flaws and glaring inequities of our existing system.

The Rowell-Sirois commission in 1940, the Carter commission in 1966 and the Goodman committee in 1983 all concluded that our federal sales tax fails to serve the interests of our economy and of our people.

For half a century our industrialists, our entrepreneurs, our exporters and the workers they employ have had to compete with one hand tied behind their back. For half a century Canadians in every province, city and town have paid billions of dollars worth of federal sales tax without knowing it.

The tax system we have endured for the past 66 years has been hidden, fundamentally unfair and damaging to Canada's economic interests at home and abroad. It has cost Canadians many, many jobs.

Now, more than ever, it is time that we listen to the lessons of history. Now, more than ever, it is time for a federal tax system driven by a bold vision of the future and not by one mired in the inertia of the past.

When you look at what we have been doing in a broad way, our vision of Canada is a challenge to the bold. It is a vision of opportunity, fairness and compassion for Canadians and their families. It is a vision of strength, moderation and peace for Canadians through the international councils of the world. It is a vision of conservatism at its best, which is to preserve what is good and to leave a better quality of life to those who follow us in terms of both a higher standard of living and a healthier environment. Perhaps most important, it is a vision deeply rooted in reality and expressed through decisive action, not empty rhetoric. The key to achieving this