

Income Tax Act and Related Acts

is fair when it deindexes the brackets and the child credits and the other credits that are given in the tax Bill? Does he think the tax reform put forward by the Conservatives is fair when it gives an average of \$4,165 in tax cuts to most people who earn over \$100,000 a year and leaves those people paying less tax in 1988 than they were paying in 1984 while at the same time all other taxpayers will be paying more? The average family will wind up paying some \$1,000 more in taxation in 1988 than it was paying when the Conservatives came to power back in 1984.

Does the Hon. Member think that tax reform is fair when it means that families earning as much as \$5,000 below the poverty line should be paying taxes? Does he think tax reform is fair when the Conservatives seem to want to wait until after the election to drop the other shoe, bringing in a sales tax scheme with no guarantee that it will cushion average families against the regressive effect of the proposed national sales tax?

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): No, I do not, Mr. Speaker. Because I agree with the Hon. Member that we should get out of here and get back to our constituents who want to take their turn at this Government as soon as possible, that is all I will say. The Hon. Member is absolutely correct. This is not fairness. Let's get out of here and give our constituents a chance to throw the Government out.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put a question to my colleague. Does my colleague support the moves of the federal Conservative Government which, at the same time as increasing the tax burden on ordinary Canadian families by \$1,500 over the last four years, has given tax write-offs to the wealthy in the order of \$100,000 in capital gains? I wonder if my colleague agrees with that approach that eases the burden on the very wealthy at the same time as it digs into the pockets of ordinary Canadian families.

I would also like to know if my colleague supports the actions of previous Liberal governments which, while in office, have consistently increased the tax burden on Canadian families while lowering the burden on corporations. The policy of making numerous tax loopholes available to corporations and wealthy individuals started with a Liberal Minister of Finance, and that led directly to increased burdens on ordinary Canadian families. I wonder if my colleague supports this Liberal favouritism for the wealthy and the Conservative favouritism for the wealthy, or is he prepared to stand up and speak out for some tax relief for ordinary Canadian families?

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, when a good colleague tempts me to stay here a little longer rather than getting back to my constituents, I do, of course, as a friend, concede to that.

I reacted to what the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) said about a progressive tax system because there is nothing that my colleagues and I value more in a tax system than progressiveness. There is nothing that is more important to us than ensuring that taxes are paid by people in terms of

their ability to pay, the ability they have over and above paying for the basic cost of living.

The Minister of State for Finance talked about progressivity in a system that has become more and more regressive. Liberals ask questions about tax reform when they created the system that Conservatives have been tinkering with over the last four years. This has never been progressive in all these years. It gets worse and worse, less and less progressive, and I do not want to have questions thrown at us by members of either Party when our concern is for tax fairness.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief because I know people want to get out of here. However, there is only so much one can take, and on a Friday afternoon, I have about had it with the hypocrisy of a political Party that runs its own political tax scam in the City of Toronto. It is using a tax credit which was designed for federal Members to seek office in the federal Parliament. It is a shame. It is a scam and it is typical of the NDP policy.

On the one hand, NDP Members were totally against write-offs. On the other hand, they did a complete flip-flop on flow-through shares. NDP Members call for no loopholes and no tax deductions, but when the small mining community came to Parliament and said that flow-through shares were permitting the exploration and development that was important to the northern economy, the NDP in one day went from no-flow to go-flow.

As far as I am concerned, enough is enough. I know that we should have the vote, but I do hope that the NDP moves expeditiously to plug the tax scam that has been ripping off the taxpayers for the last number of years.

● (1420)

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Hon. Member was mercifully brief in her intervention.

Mr. Grisé: Which you never are.

Mr. Cassidy: I want to point out that the NDP has the same privileges as every other Party under the election expense legislation introduced by the Liberal Government. If the Liberals wanted to ensure that the money was spent exclusively on federal election campaigns, it could have drafted the legislation to ensure that.

Mr. Minaker: Two wrongs make a right?

Mr. Cassidy: I note that the official spokesperson for the Liberal Party has now indicated she is opposed to flow-through shares. She is opposed to economic development in mining communities.

Ms. Copps: Not at all.

Mr. Cassidy: I would point out as well that yesterday her Party advocated a reduction in tax on capital gains. That is