

Government Orders

Kamloops, Red Deer, and right across the country in all the northern areas you have to.

So what we are saying is that certain Canadians will have to spend a lot more of their hard earned money on sales taxes on items that they must buy, while southerners will not have to, or do not have to buy in the same amount. Heating fuel perhaps is the most obvious.

As my hon. colleague from the Yukon pointed out, the far northern regions are going to be extremely hard hit, not only generally by the Conservative government tax programs, but by this particular tax measure on telephone calls. That is what we are talking about.

When people in Canada who live in remote areas have a need to communicate for personal reasons, business reasons, or just day-to-day living reasons, make a long distance call; they are not like others living in southern Canada who simply pick up the telephone and dial to anybody they want to, virtually toll-free. That is not the way in the north. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, it is long distance telephone rates; it is long distance communication. When a tax is put on telecommunications, obviously you are taxing more heavily those people who have a greater amount of their purchasing power going into long distance calls.

My hon. colleague for the Yukon indicated that this needs to be amended to recognize that some Canadians experience greater telephone communications cost simply because of where they happen to live in this country. It seems to be unfair that we would introduce a tax that would obviously discriminate against those Canadians living in remote areas, a tax that would be biased against those Canadians who live in remote areas.

I would venture to say that virtually every tax initiative we have seen introduced by the Conservative government does just that. Certainly, the goods and services tax will, and now in Bill C-20, we are recognizing that again in terms of telecommunications costs, those people who live in more remote areas will be adversely affected.

For that reason, my hon. colleague for Yukon suggests that we amend the bill so that the telecommunications service tax not be allotted to northern members as is defined by the tax act which, of course, includes people living in the northern parts of Ontario, Quebec, New-

foundland, Manitoba, and other points west. I think it is a very reasoned amendment.

I ask my hon. Conservative friends across the aisle to speak out on some of these measures. Many members here come from remote areas, from far northern constituencies.

• (1220)

Are they suggesting, by the fact that they are mute on this issue, that they in fact support it and think it is a good idea to be taxing people who live in distant communities on their telephone charges. That is what they are saying because so far only one has had the courage to speak out on behalf of his constituents, and he has supported this amendment as any thoughtful parliamentarian would.

I will conclude my remarks in anticipation that we will hear some thoughtful interjections from hon. members opposite as we move to try and improve Bill C-20. As my colleague from Nickel Belt indicated in a very succinct fashion, this is one more in the long list of tax grabs by this government.

The government always asks where else can it get the money. One obvious way would be to reduce interest rates immediately which would collapse a good part of the deficit and the debt. It would stimulate, almost automatically, economic activity in every part of the country which would generate more revenue in sales tax, excise tax, personal tax, business tax and corporate tax. But no, Mr. Speaker, we are bound and determined that interest rates will remain very high and consequently the debts of the country will increase, the deficit increases, and economic development is strangled as a result of fiscal and other financial policies.

There are many places to get tax money beyond changing the interest rate policy. May I suggest just one in conclusion. I think all of us are well aware of the 60,000 profitable corporations in this country that do not pay any income tax at all. Of course, there are many that pay \$20 a year, \$200 a year, or \$500 a year, but many do not pay a single penny in income tax. There are 60,000 large profitable corporations not paying a single cent. It is shameful. Other countries like the United States does not allow this to occur. In 1986 President Reagan brought in a minimum corporate tax so that there are not