

*Excise Tax*

nately he is not present in the Chamber at the moment, but his Parliamentary Secretary, in the person of the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre, is here. As reported on page 10494 of *Hansard* for June 11, 1981, I asked the President of the Privy Council some questions regarding disaster aid. In reply to my question concerning whether or not there should be some involvement from the private sector, he agreed and said:

Should the individual and the private sector become more involved? I fully agree with his suggestion—

He went on to say:

—we are quite willing to consult the private sector—

I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary who will speak next whether any Government action has been taken. To the best of my knowledge, no such action has been taken along those lines. It is disappointing that we have not had the benefit of input from the private sector, especially from people such as those in Oxford who have had first-hand experience at overcoming disaster problems.

I would like to close my remarks with a one and a half line quotation which I used in my original presentation of this motion on January 19, 1981, when I quoted Edmund Burke. When he was giving his second speech respecting conciliation with America, Edmund Burke said:

It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do; but what humanity, reason and justice tell me I ought to do.

The Government philosophically agrees with us; it knows what ought to be done. I challenge the Government to allow the motion to be referred to committee where it can be discussed further and possibly result in putting some humanity into the affairs of Government.

**Mr. Douglas Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to pay tribute to the previous speakers who have obviously worked hard on this matter. I also want to compliment the Hon. Member for Lambton-Middlesex (Mr. Ferguson). Last spring his riding experienced a tornado. I believe three town-

ships in that area were very seriously affected. He told me that local people made outstanding contributions as volunteers. They contributed to the rebuilding of their neighbours' homes, farms and facilities. He has asked me to refer specifically to the outstanding work that was done by the Mennonite relief organizations. People came by the busload from all over southern Ontario to his riding and worked very hard to improve and restore the local economy. I pay tribute to the Hon. Member and all those dedicated volunteers in his riding who helped to restore the local situation.

This is a familiar topic and one which has been discussed widely in the House; it is an approach which has been discussed widely. The previous speaker referred to a stirring quotation from Edmund Burke. It is a handy quotation, a very emotional one which makes it difficult for the next speaker to rise and say that he has serious reservations. Unfortunately I do have serious reservations.

We have a system now that rebates people in disaster areas for the costs they incur. There is a formula for that. We make payments to rebate people who have experienced disasters. The formula recognizes the primary responsibility of the Province, but as soon as costs rise above a certain level—I think it is \$1 per capita of the provincial population—we become involved. As the costs increase beyond that level, our involvement becomes deeper.

It is important to note that under these rebates we also rebate the cost of the federal sales tax. To answer his concern about the morality, we are not keeping federal sales tax; we are rebating it when we become involved in disaster relief. Hopefully that will settle the issue in the Hon. Member's mind.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It being six o'clock p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at eleven o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).

At 6 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.