

Adjournment Debate

almost 50 per cent of the Province's gross domestic product. The percentages for the other Atlantic Provinces are also very high. This leaves little doubt about the commitment of the Government to support and assist New Brunswick and the other Atlantic Provinces.

NATIONAL REVENUE—REPORTED CONFISCATION OF
CHILDREN'S BANK ACCOUNTS. (B) TAXPAYERS' MEETING AT
ALDERGROVE, B.C.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is inevitable that this Parliament seems to carry on; and there are a couple of other inevitabilities. One day we shall all die, and throughout our existence on this earth we shall all pay taxes. The problem is facing taxes. We cannot change death, and there are a number of things we cannot change. We probably cannot change the fact that we have to pay taxes, but we certainly can change the fact that when we pay them it should be with equity and justice. Throughout history there have been references to tax collectors. There have been biblical references, and references in the doomsday book; everything you have is recorded and the Government takes its share. It does not matter what the "ism" is, whether it is totalitarianism on the right side or the left, there is always the extraction of taxes from the individual for what is presumed to be the common good.

● (1810)

Theoretically, we live in a better system. We live in a system of democracy and that system provides justice and equity. The Government has a special role to play in the balance between the taxpayer on one side and the tax collector on the other. Government should be more than just the tax collector. It should, in fact, be the fulcrum in the balance which assures equity and justice.

Obviously, the tax collector must have power to collect the taxes and the taxpayer must have the ability to produce taxes. I do not object to the power of the tax collector. However, I expect the Government to stand in the middle and provide the balance which assures equity. This is not happening in the case of this particular Minister. He has moved away from this role. He has passed over this role and the scales of justice have tipped. The Minister does not stand with control in the centre, being fair to both sides. He has tilted that fairness to the side of the tax collector who has been allowed more freedom and right under the revenue collection act than in fact he should have. The power vacuum has been filled by the tax collector in a very unjust and unconscionable manner.

The person who is responsible for this is the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Bussi eres). He can make a scapegoat of his Deputy Minister. He can fire him and let him take the blame. However, although the advice may have come from the Deputy Minister, the Minister in fact was the one who took the advice and implemented it. His ministerial responsibility is what is at stake here, and that has not been resolved adequately. The wrong Minister has resigned. It should have been the

Minister, not the Deputy Minister. The Minister should give his resignation to this House of Commons.

He tells us he has figured it all out, he has had an education, but his education has been at the expense of not just the strong in our society, but of the the weak and poor who are not able to protect their own rights. And then we have the collection of money from children; the collection of money from the parents through the children as in the case I raised. It does not matter that in the end the money was paid back into the child's bank account. That has nothing to do with it.

The fact is that Revenue Canada did place the order, the order went to the bank and the bank did take \$34 out of this young child's account in the name of Revenue Canada, which is under the orders of the Minister. The Minister stole that money from the bank account of that child. Even if it was done in error and was corrected, the fact that it could occur indicates something is very wrong. The Minister can say it is the bank's fault but the bank is regulated by the Government of Canada. It is not the bank's fault if the Government of Canada allows that power to be abused in that manner. The Minister of Revenue caused the action to begin and it went too far.

Did he make a recommendation that the Bank Act be changed to make sure that a person needs a warrant if he is going to dip into the bank account of any child or third party of any kind? It is not just a child's account that is in jeopardy, but the parents' or anyone they can tie in in any way with the person they are trying to claim the taxes from.

● (1815)

I am very concerned at the hurt I have seen in my community. It is not the big guy, the guy who can buy the lawyers and accountants to protect him, it is the little guy who is being forced into bankruptcy. It is the little guy who has suffered unfortunate incident upon unfortunate incident, and the most unfortunate of all, they all tell you, is the way they have been treated and victimized by this Department.

I also raised the question of a meeting which had been held where people said that someone from Revenue Canada was out in the parking lot taking down licence plate numbers. Everyone believed that. Whether or not they took down licence plate numbers, whether it was Revenue Canada or whoever does not matter. What is wrong is that the people who attended that meeting were in such a state of fear of Revenue Canada that they would believe this to be so. That kind of power, that kind of terrorism, by a Minister, by the Government, must stop now.

Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I find myself in a position of answering accusations which barely merit a reply, since they are based on a mistake. It continue to astound me how quickly the news media reports proliferate and how long they take to die, regardless of their accuracy. The Hon. Member's question on whether it is true that Revenue Canada has confiscated bank accounts of chil-