

Excise

United States. As long as the U.S. dollar was trading on a basis higher than the Canadian dollar, the Canadian ship-builders could survive economically. But now the U.S. dollar trades on a basis lower than the Canadian dollar, and this is compounding the problems of our boat builders.

The average pleasure craft requires a motor, even if it is a sailing yacht, for motor power is required to bring it into port in the event that it is becalmed. I cannot help but wonder why the minister, if he needs money so badly, did not simply put the excise tax on the motor alone rather than on the entire boat. If he persists—and I say this with due respect to the minister—in this foolhardy proposal, he will simply be killing the goose which has been laying the golden eggs which the minister and his government dearly love to tax so highly.

This tax points out more clearly than any words of mine that in bureaucratic Ottawa the right hand simply does not know what the left hand is doing. Here we have a department of Regional Economic Expansion making grants to assist industry, on the one hand, in regionally depressed areas, while the Minister of Finance on the other hand is establishing policies which basically lead to the destruction of local industries on a massive scale, leading in turn to still further unemployment, a problem which is seriously plaguing the present government and the country.

This 10 per cent tax deals our boat building industry a crippling blow which it may well not survive. I implore the minister to reconsider this matter, to cut down on his need for money by cutting down on his massive public building program for Ottawa and Hull for at least a few years, in the hope that this will take off the pressure for additional funds, pressure which, I submit, is killing the boat building industry in Nova Scotia as well as other private industries in this country.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am making this point of order now because I want to give the minister an opportunity to consider it. My point of order relates to item 11 in clause 21(2), relating to boats. My point of order is that this item offends against Standing Order 60(11).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has already spoken, and what he is now saying could have been said in his speech. The House is considering the second reading of a bill, and I do not see how it can consider a clause in the bill until and unless the House goes into committee of the whole. I see the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) shaking his head, and if he has a different opinion I would invite his comments.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my comments are very brief. First of all, I do not know that there has ever been any rule which provides that having spoken during the second stage of a bill an hon. member cannot rise subsequently on a point of order. That is item one. Secondly, I submit that although the hon. member is referring to a particular item which could be discussed in the committee stage, I put it to you that his point of order goes to the very resolution on which the bill is founded.

The minister is asking this House to give approval in principle to a bill which, on the basis of the argument that

[Mr. Crouse.]

will be advanced by my colleague, is defective under our standing orders. I can give Your Honour chapter and verse of previous examples. My colleague will explain, and I do not want to steal his thunder. I suggest that Your Honour hear him out, and then I think you will see that on the basis of his proposal it is at second reading stage that this matter should be raised. It could be raised on no other occasion than on second reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am, of course, ready to listen to the hon. member's argument. The principal point that I was making, without my listening to the point of order—though I might be mistaken about this—was that I was afraid he was going to involve himself in another speech, using the excuse of a point of order to complete some comments that he did not make when he had the floor. I still question what the hon. member is attempting to do at this time. Nothing would have prevented him from at least enlightening the Chair during the course of his speech. Then, in view of the time element, we would not have had to go into a procedural debate which might take up all the available time. The hon. member for Okanagan Boundary.

Mr. Whittaker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, my point of order is that item 11 in clause 21(2) relating to boats offends against Standing Order 60(11). This Standing Order provides:

The adoption of any Ways and Means motion shall be an order to bring in a bill or bills based on the provisions of any such motion.

The ways and means motion upon which this bill purports to be based was adopted on December 2, 1974. With respect to item 11, the ways and means motion reads as follows:

Boats, other than naval vessels, designed to be propelled primarily by motors exceeding twenty horsepower: and motors exceeding twenty horsepower (including drive assemblies) for boats—ten per cent.

This is to be found at page 219 of the English version of the budget motions. The French version is at page 232. I point out that the exception in the French version reads "autres que les navires de guerre". The English version in the bill, at page 11, refers to:

Boats, other than boats purchased or imported by Her Majesty in right of Canada for use exclusively by the Government of Canada . . .

I would point out that the meaning of "boat" to which the tax applies is affected as the exception widens or narrows. In the ways and means motion, the exception is "naval vessels". Note the distinction in the use of the word "boats" and, again, "vessels". Then, also, "vessels" is qualified only by the adjective "naval". It can be argued that "naval" is used to assure that "vessel" is understood in the sense of a ship, rather than any other meaning that the word "vessel" can have.

In this use the distinction maintained by many yachtsmen is upheld, namely, that there is a distinction between a "boat" and a "vessel". Generally this distinction relates to size. In this interpretation the tax would not apply to vessels whether owned by a private citizen or corporation or by the Crown. On the other hand, the tax would apply to boats, other than the class of naval vessels, even though owned by the Crown.

In support of this interpretation, the draftsmen of the item in the bill have dropped the use of "naval" and