

Excise Tax Act

Does the Hon. Member really feel that he can go back to his constituents? The Government has announced a program to allow some completion of unemployment insurance entitlement for his constituents, and that is welcome, but it has yet to pull back on saying to the same fishermen, who could not even reach the point where they could receive unemployment insurance, that they will have to pay more than 25 per cent of their income this past year toward paying off tax liabilities from previous years with National Revenue. If the Government were really concerned, it would be doing something about that as well, but it is not taking place. What kind of Government does the Hon. Member find himself a part of which in fact robs the poor in order to benefit the rich? It is a kind of reverse Robin Hood tactic, and the Newfoundlanders whom I know do not stand for that kind of reverse tactic.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member decided to sit down and make a little time available to me in which to respond to him. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. I am sure his colleagues in Ontario thought that when they formed a coalition with the provincial Liberal Government. In order to provide the services which people want, they found it necessary to increase taxes. I am sure the Premier of Ontario was not happy to have his Finance Minister do that.

When I made reference to the Atlantic Accord, I did not say that the Government of Canada was putting in \$225 million for the training of people to work on oil rigs and in the developmental stages of Hibernia. That is a substantial amount of money. People are grateful that a Government in which they believe could come to an agreement with a provincial Government in just five months in office. I am proud to be part of that Government, even though there will be times when I have to take part in decision-making that I do not fully agree with but, as I have already said, that will be necessary if we are to continue to govern and give the needy of the country the things they deserve and to which they are entitled.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the debate today takes place in rather unusual circumstances, provoked by the publication of public opinion polls this morning whereby it would appear that there has been a sudden drop in Progressive Conservative support across the country. It is a sudden drop that reflects the political reality where the federal Conservatives seem to be holding only a six point lead over the Liberals and trailing the Liberal Party in every region except in the West. According to this poll also, the Conservative losses have occurred in every region and demographic group and they are the greatest in Ontario, especially in Toronto.

● (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, on point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for LaSalle, on a point of order.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, I was waiting to see whether I could find some relevance to the debate. You asked the House a while ago to resume debate on Bill C-80. I have the Bill here, and although I have looked everywhere, I fail to see any connection with the points the Hon. Member is trying to make.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) has the floor and is an experienced parliamentarian, and of course he will speak to the Bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member for LaSalle (Mr. Lanthier) would give me a few minutes, I would be delighted to demonstrate the relevance of this poll to Bill C-80.

[English]

In continuing with this background to this debate it would appear that middle-aged Canadians, professionals, executives and union members have also deserted the Tory Party in large numbers. In Ontario the federal Liberals have moved ahead for the first time since June, 1984.

Mrs. Mailly: The Bill isn't passed yet. This is not relevant.

Mr. Caccia: Exactly. That is an interesting point. I will take it into account in a short moment. In Quebec the Conservatives are slightly—

Mr. Blenkarn: That is what happened to you. You believed the polls last June.

Mr. Caccia: —trailing the Liberals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is no doubt interesting but could the Member please get to the Bill shortly. I understand that he wants to make a preamble, which is fine, but I would ask him to come to the Bill, please.

Mr. Caccia: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly heed your advice. I was getting there by also reviewing Atlantic Canada, but your urging brings me to raise the question: is this because of these budget measures and the Ways and Means measures in Bill C-80? That question, of course, is being answered by those of us in the Official Opposition by opposing the measures contained in Bill C-80 and in having for months and months—

[Translation]

Mrs. Mailly: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Gatineau, on a point of order.

Mrs. Mailly: Mr. Speaker . . . Yes, well, the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) just left the House after addressing some comments to me. He remarked a while ago that I was always the first to complain about people asking questions while I was speaking. I want to point out to him that my