

The Budget—Mr. Grégoire

In the last two years, the Quebec government has increased the sales tax by 2 per cent; the federal government has increased it by 1 per cent. The Quebec government increased the personal income tax; the government in Ottawa did the same. The Quebec government increased the tax on certain goods, and so did Ottawa. We are the only people in the world who accept and tolerate that two different governments should have the right to tax us, very often, for the same purposes.

Our money is being grabbed from both sides. When two governments levy taxes, this entails expenditures that could be avoided if one government only managed our affairs. Let me give you a few examples, Mr. Speaker.

The federal government pays family allowances to children under 16 years of age; so does the Quebec government. Has anyone considered for a moment that this means that civil servants in Ottawa make a survey of all the children under 16, others keep the records up to date, prepare the family allowance cheques, stamp and mail them?

All this is happening in Ottawa, while other civil servants in Quebec do exactly the same thing in respect to family allowance cheques for children in Quebec. This duplicates the expenditures, since both Ottawa and Quebec have to set up a classification system, with a list of names of all children with respect to family allowances. Both governments have to have their own personnel—which makes it twice as large—to send out family allowance cheques. In addition, two series of cheques and envelopes have to be used; Ottawa pays the postage once, and Quebec a second time. For postage costs only, the federal government expenditure for family allowances amounts to \$2.2 million per year. Then, postage has to be paid again in Quebec to mail other family allowance cheques concerning the same children.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, how stupid it is to have a system under which citizens are governed by two separate administrations both doing the same thing at twice the cost, when one expense would be sufficient, just to send out family allowance cheques? Would it not be better to have only one administrative service, using only one envelope for both cheques?

The same thing goes for the Department of National Revenue.

Mr. Latulippe: How much does it cost to collect taxes?

Mr. Grégoire: Is the hon. member for Compton-Frontenac asking me how much it costs to collect taxes? We are the only people in the world with the luxury of two income tax collecting agencies, one in Ottawa and one in Quebec city.

• (3:30 p.m.)

In both places, there are inspectors, auditors, office workers, secretaries and the citizen himself is obliged to fill out two different tax returns: one in Ottawa, and one in Quebec, using exactly the same forms. He sends one return with one amount to Ottawa, and another amount to Quebec with another return. In Ottawa, auditors check to see if the tax return—Mr. Speaker, I hear some muffled noises coming from outside—

Mr. Churchill: Is it a coup d'état?

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I see that objections against the situation I put forward, are raised, and rightly so—

An hon. Member: Grégoire has come.

Mr. Grégoire: Then, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Chrétien: It is the voice of God—

Mr. Grégoire: I should perhaps move the adjournment, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, I said that in Ottawa—

An hon. Member: We are going to adjourn—

Mr. Grégoire: Should I move the adjournment of the house, Mr. Speaker, or carry on? In fact, with such a small number of members in the house—

Some hon. Members: It is the children, perhaps the balloons—

Mr. Lewis: It is the only thing that can keep him quiet.

Mr. Grégoire: The snow perhaps! Ah, the hon. Minister of Finance is paying for the fireworks on parliament hill in an attempt to make the people forget about his disastrous budget.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Grégoire: It is somewhat the same method which was used by the Roman emperor Nero who, in an attempt to make his people forget about the great fire of Rome, gave them bread and circuses.