

Government Orders

I am willing to say two or three things on that though, Mr. Speaker, quite briefly. First, I support this tax and I defend this tax. I have defended and promoted this tax for three years.

• (1650)

Second, come good or bad, I am willing to let my constituents make their decisions on this tax, based on discussions in this House of Commons and based on the reality and truth of this tax. If it takes my colleagues opposite to block that information they get from my constituents, I am prepared to wait until this tax is in place, until this tax has an opportunity to operate. I will let my constituents judge then as to whether this tax is good or bad. Then and only then will my constituents judge me, not the hon. member who comes along and pats us on the head, like the great former premier.

Mr. MacWilliam: Bye, bye.

Mr. Reid: Bye, bye, fair enough. When that hon. member is back giving counselling, I will be in this House referring colleagues to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will allow one short question for the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Island.

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to travel with the hon. member opposite, and I know he has a good sense of humour. That has been well demonstrated in his address this afternoon, especially as he relates to the talk of fairness in this GST and the “economic growth” that this is going to promote. I think this speaks a lot for his sense of humour.

We are talking about the relative merits of the manufacturers’ sales tax. I think it has already been made clear in this House that no one is in favour of the manufacturers’ sales tax. I think his tactic of putting the major focus of his debate on the manufacturers’ sales tax is a means of avoiding the real issue. That real issue is tax reform.

When we are talking about tax fairness, I would just like to ask him how he can talk about tax fairness when over the last 40 years we have seen a real shift from taxing corporations to taxing individuals. In 1980, the tax was 69 per cent for individuals and 30 per cent for

corporations. The projections for 1990 are 79 per cent for individuals and 21 per cent for corporations. We are talking about fairness in the tax system. How can he talk about fairness when this government is bringing in this kind of “tax reform”?

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because I know other members want to speak on this. My colleague from Calgary is next on our side. I know he would certainly like to address the comments of my friend from British Columbia. He and 26 of his colleagues support this tax.

The whole point of this, of course, is to replace the manufacturers’ sales tax. That is a position held by all parties in this House, that the manufacturers’ sales tax must be replaced. If we want to deal with the question of tax fairness and redressing the balance, in June 1987 this government came forward with a tax reform that recognized quite clearly there was a problem. Individuals were taking too much of the burden of income tax. The immediate effect of phase one of tax reform was to immediately shift \$3 billion of that burden away from individuals and into the corporate sector.

More than that, it eliminated some of the huge loopholes for businesses. It took away some of the tax shelters that businesses had taken advantage of needlessly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments have now terminated. On debate, the hon. member for Algoma.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I think there might be unanimous consent in the House to entertain a motion that the member from Calgary Northeast now be heard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Algoma has the floor on debate.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I thought it would be very interesting to hear the hon. member for Calgary Northeast. I am sure that every member of this House will want to be here tomorrow to hear him.

We would not want to break the stride of his speech, because we will hear from one honest Tory. He is listening to the people. This performance we have just seen from the hon. member for St. John’s East shows that he obviously had a very weak case. That is why he thumped the desk so loud and spoke so loud.