

Government Orders

on Atlantic Canada/Crisis in Atlantic Industry; the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Comuzzi)—Transportation—Impact of VIA Rail Corporate Plan/Government Position.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT AND EXCISE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of report stage of Bill C-20, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee, and on Motions Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 standing in the name of the hon. member for Calgary Northeast.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my colleague for Edmonton East has presented very succinctly and very cogently the fallacy and the hypocrisy of a government that not so long ago was saying that the manufacturers' sales tax is this so-called silent killer of jobs, and yet they have not hesitated to prostitute themselves and take as much profits and money out of people's pockets as they can from this silent killer.

There is a lesson here to be extrapolated by the way in which the government has used the manufacturers' sales tax with all its warts and with all its problems. The government just uses it as a cash cow. It moved it from 9 per cent to now 13.5 per cent.

The government has used it to milk from the consumers of this country every buck it can get. It should make all of us quake in our boots, we should all shake in our beds, and shiver in our timbers—not all at the same time—but it should give us no ease to see how this government is moving.

In fact, there are 17 countries in the world that have put in a goods and services tax, some call it a VAT tax. Only one of the 17 to date has not increased the rate of that tax since it was implemented. The most recent example, the one this government, this Prime Minister, and this Finance Minister are constantly throwing into the faces of New Democrats, is the Government of New Zealand. The government of New Zealand introduced a goods and services tax, and I understand its Finance

Minister is here appearing before the Finance Committee as I speak giving advice. Here is a country that is giving advice to Michael Wilson, a country that introduced a goods and services tax in 1986 at 10 per cent. Today that tax is 14 per cent. It is not three years old and it is now 14 per cent. It has gone up 4 per cent in three years. This has got to be a symphony to the ears of Michael Wilson, the Finance Minister. He has dreams of sugarplums dancing in his head and it is not even Christmas Eve. This guy sees here the wherewithal to raise billions and billions of dollars.

To administer the present manufacturers' sales tax, the government has 1,500 bureaucrats. What did the Minister of Revenue announce the other day? The government is going to hire 4,000 more in addition to the 1,500. What happened to the 1,500? He did not make them disappear. The 1,500 has now increased by 4,000, even though we are abandoning the manufacturers' sales tax in the proposal, so we are still keeping the 1,500. You do not want to play poker with that guy, he would pick your pockets clean. So you have 4,000 and 1,500 which is 5,500 bureaucrats. I am sure the taxpayers out there are delighted to hear that hundreds of millions of dollars will go to pay the salaries of 5,500 bureaucrats who will pick their pockets.

This is a crying shame. This government sees the possibilities. It is projecting \$25 billion from this goods and services tax. Everything from cribs to coffins, from condoms to copper pots will all be taxed. Then the government is still going to collect those excise taxes. When it is finished fleecing the sheep there will be \$40 billion in the treasury.

I have read that this government has sent the bill on goods and services to the printers to be printed. Yes, it has sent it to the printers. What a sham of having the Chairman of the Finance Committee traipsing around the country giving the impression that somehow or other he had a conversion and is now willing to listen to what the people of Canada have to say.

It is cynical to note that every one of those witnesses who have come before the committee all said: "I agree with this thing, but don't tax me. Tax this guy over here and except me." We saw the Burger Kings, the McDonalds. "Don't tax me, tax everybody else". Of course, big business says that. They want to continue their lunches. Do not touch the executive lunches. Food in the grocery stores are exempt. The people in the restaurants are