

*Government Orders*

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in its submission to the finance committee came out with the statement:

We do not favour the maintenance of the current manufacturers' sales tax. Its serious flaws have been well documented and need not be repeated here; and we do support the concept of a value added tax as a vehicle that could serve as a best replacement mechanism.

The reason I mention that is because the Chamber of Commerce, along with other business groups, has really been in favour of the concept of a value-added tax like the goods and services tax. Some of them have been saying, however, broaden the base and get rid of some of the exemptions. I know that there are members in this House who have some sympathy for that. Fortunately, the government in its wisdom has decided that food, basic groceries in grocery stores, should not be taxed.

I support that theory but there are members in this House who do not support that theory. I would like to quote what one of them had to say on May 11, 1989. It is recorded in *Hansard* and speaking is the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, not a Conservative, I should point out. I quote:

I urge the government to correct the discrepancies by providing a larger tax credit for the poorest people in the community.

He goes on to talk about the reasons for it:

It is easy to identify them, to know how much income they are getting and how much they are spending. It would be much easier to determine the size of the credit they should receive. Exemptions would only make the process much more difficult.

He also said that exemptions will not make it more fair, exemptions will make the tax much more difficult to administer, exemptions will be of greater benefit to those who have more money than to those who have less money.

This is a presentation by an NDP member of this House. Here we have the Chamber of Commerce and the NDP saying there should not be any exemptions and yet the Conservatives showing at least that they have some heart and that they do care for low and moderate-income Canadians, first by not taxing the basic food commodities that they need and second, by providing them with a very enriched tax credit to make sure that they are in fact able to overcome the added cost of the tax in some of those areas where they are affected.

The distribution of the tax, of course, goes to Canadians in need. I have seen some reports dealing extensively with just who does get the benefit of the federal sales tax credits. In fact, 64 per cent of Canadian families will receive the benefit of a sales tax credit commencing in 1991. If they file their returns this year, they will receive their first cheque in December 1990.

It is significant that 64 per cent get the credit. It is even more significant that in those parts of Canada where the assistance is most needed, families will get a sales tax credit. For example, in those parts of Canada where some of the opposition members seems so intent on stirring the opposition they do not mention to the people of Newfoundland that 85 per cent of Newfoundland families will be getting a sales tax credit. They do not mention in Prince Edward Island that 78 per cent of Prince Edward Island families will be getting the sales tax credit. I have not heard them mention in Nova Scotia that 74 per cent will receive the sales tax credit.

As you can see, I could go on with a whole series of issues. At this point, my time is really wrapping up. Very clearly, this is excellent legislation and I think it is time the opposition started telling everyone the facts, rather than what they are saying.

**Mr. Lewis:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to advise the House that tomorrow will be an allotted day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Questions or comments. The hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

**Mr. McCurdy:** Madam Speaker, I was up in my office when the member for Ontario had the unmitigated nerve to mention Windsor in the same breath as the GST, citing in support of his argument *The Windsor Star*, which criticized the president of the local labour council, Gary Parent, and Gord Henderson, one of the most popular columnists in *The Windsor Star*, on the basis that that would support the notion that people in Windsor somehow had gone completely crazy and have now switched sides and are supporting the GST.

I have in my office between 8,000 and 9,000 protests against the GST that were gathered within the city within a matter of 10 days in response to an ad in the newspaper placed by a group of people who in other