

Government Orders

That is why I support the Hon. Member's motion, and I believe Parliament should vote in favour of this motion so that people in Canada's North can live the same way as people in Central Canada, in Ontario.

[*English*]

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a few words to say on this particular amendment. First of all the real solution here, I say to the member for Yukon, would be not to have this latest imposition at all. I do not know where the government is going. I guess I do know where it is going, but I do not like where it is going, particularly on this communications tax.

Mr. Murphy: What about transportation?

Mr. Simmons: The member has chosen half a loaf, and we support that. I hear some coming awake in the NDP early this morning, earlier than usual.

I was about to say, if our colleague would just restrain himself for the moment, that I support what the member is doing because it is at least half a loaf, but the real solution is for the government to withdraw this infamous thing before it inflicts anything further on northerners and southerners alike.

In so far as this communication tax is concerned we have to put it in context with respect to people in my province who are already paying, quite apart from the federal tax which is now going to go to 11 per cent if the administration has its way, paying another 10 per cent provincially so that in compound terms they are paying about 22 per cent because they are paying a tax on a tax. You know that story, Mr. Speaker.

This is uncalled for. It is not needed at all, but if it must go forward then the very least that can be done is that we entertain the amendment put forward by the member for Yukon to at least exempt northern residents. They, in a very particular way, are called upon to bear the tax brunt in this country. The gentleman from Calgary Northeast put it very well when he spoke briefly to the amendment a minute ago. Everywhere one turns, whether it is in clause 1 or elsewhere in the bill, the tax grab continues. This infamous tax grab continues unabated. The unrelenting pulverization of the people least able to pay is well under way by this government.

• (1200)

If one were to take the regional impact of the tax measures in this budget and look at it as it affects northerners, as it affects people living generally in rural parts of this country, one would very quickly and unmistakably come to the conclusion that this government has a hate on for rural people. It has a particular thing in its craw about people who do not live in large urban centres. Everywhere one turns, whether it has to do with the railway abandonments, the closing of rural post offices, the sabotaging of the job creation programs, or if one turns directly to tax measures, which is our subject here today, one will find that the whole program of the government is particularly aimed at rural Canadians. Why are rural Canadians being asked to bear an undue amount of the load of the tax burden and so far as cut-backs are concerned? One would come to the conclusion that this government is in the business of overtly, deliberately shutting down rural Canada.

Take, for example, the job development strategy. There was a time when people in areas characteristic of seasonal employment could look to that kind of a program to tide them over. Not anymore. Now those people have a choice of not qualifying for those seasonal jobs or moving to urban centres, because the caveat about training requirements in those programs dictates, in effect, that those people can only qualify for those training opportunities if they live in urban areas where there are more sensible training options available. That is just one of the many examples that we can take from the program of this government to demonstrate that it has a hate on for rural Canadians. It is out to get rural Canadians. This particular clause, like the other clause in this bill that we will be dealing with over the next few days, is a demonstration of that. I have delight in supporting the amendment if it comes to that. At least, let us exempt northern Canadians. But the real solution is to get rid of the provision altogether and to have no increase whatsoever in the communications tax.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the Liberal member for Burin—St. George's get up and speak about how this hurt the north and the rural areas of the country. I remember when he was on the government benches the Liberal government of the day introduced a tax on transportation. We spoke against that and explained that a tax on transportation