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MP strikes back at critics

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Blenkarn speaks his mind

By JOHN STEWART
Staff Reporter

Mississauga South MP Don Blenkarn says he was just giving his opinion about "where the (Conservative) caucus was going" when he made remarks about the federal deficit.

Last week, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told the Commons Blenkarn was not speaking for the government when he made the remarks. "That's quite right," says the veteran MP. "I don't declare government policy."

When he suggested that Finance Minister Michael Wilson is under heavy pressure to reduce the deficit

by more than \$5 billion in the next budget, Blenkarn was merely giving his reading of what is happening in caucus, he said this week after returning from a trip to Washington, D.C.

Blenkarn says he never made remarks attributed to him stating that Wilson will likely have to increase the excise tax on gasoline.

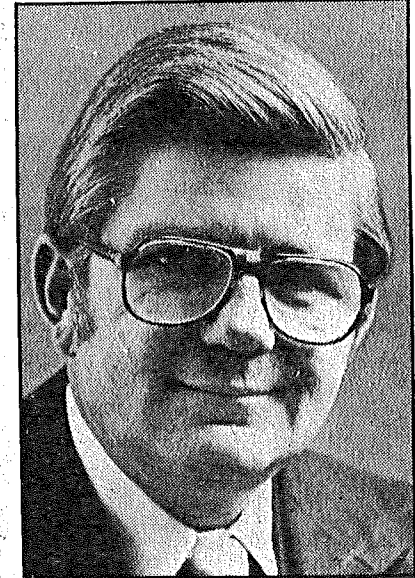
While in Washington, Blenkarn and 12 other Canadian politicians met with American officials about income tax legislation. "We have an Income Tax Act that is frankly incomprehensible," says the Port Credit lawyer.

"The act is so complicated that there is probably no one in Canada

who really understands the whole thing," complains Blenkarn.

One idea the members of the federal finance committee, which Blenkarn chairs, brought back was a special form used in the U.S. for wage earners who are single, have no dependants and earn no more than \$400 a year in bank interest. That nine-line form serves about a quarter of all those who file income tax returns in America.

Blenkarn hopes his committee can make recommendations to Parliament to considerably simplify income tax legislation, and the income tax filing form.



DON BLENKARN