

moment that this represents any kind of retreat. I do not think that it represents a dereliction of duty. It is simply a recognition that it is such a complex issue that it is the duty of the government to give the public an opportunity to be heard.

I have only a few minutes remaining. I would dearly love to go on to some other matters. I wish to deal with this business of being heard and the problems of what is commonly referred to as involvement or participation. Something else which the white paper on taxation and the exercise demonstrated is that, in fact, the participation process is still far from perfect. What happened is that it provides amplification for the organized rather than the disorganized. In fact, the participation process to which all of us subscribe and advocate at every level and every opportunity has to be defined still further so that we do not get a situation where the powerful and those who have a strong voice are simply given more opportunity to be heard and make a louder amplification of their views while the so-called disorganized and non-affiliated remain in their frustrating silence.

If we are going to carry on with what I believe to be an essential need in our society, that is, to get a proper and balanced feedback from the community at large, what we have learned from the exercise on tax reform is that the government must accelerate what we are doing, contribute and help those groups such as the poor and what I call the deprived, the native groups of various kinds and others who would not normally have the opportunity to get in what is loosely referred to as their two cents worth.

I repeat that I believe that the participation process has proved itself in this case. I believe it has illustrated that it is one thing to have theories and it is something else again to be able to implement these in this theoretical fashion and impose them on people. What the government and this House must do is set national objectives for Canada, but the pace at which the public moves along that path toward those objectives is going to be determined by them, not by us.

The other day I read a comment of a very well-known philosopher. I sometimes wish it could be put up on each of the four walls of this building. It is that "the essence of tyranny is the denial of complexity." We will be doing a very great disservice to the people of this country if all we do is seek to become a kind of lightning rod or polarization point for every area of discontent that exists. If we attempt to go off in all directions at the same time trying to answer each one of these, becoming a kind of firefighting outfit even though recognizing that many of the proposals we are trying to cope with in this helter-skelter manner are not only conflicting and contradicting, in the end they have to be disastrously self-defeating.

When one looks at the figures for the growth of expenditures that we already have and sees that there is very little likelihood that these expenditures can in fact be turned down in the immediate future and, as expressed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) this morning, certain needs are crying out to be filled, he must ask himself how we can do these things in

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a rational and reasonable manner, a manner that will not put a tax burden on the Canadian public which will be totally intolerable and in a way that will not in fact infringe individual freedoms and build into this country a strait-jacket of regulations and conflicting jurisdictions. What I am really saying is that things are much more complex than many in this House are prepared to admit, and the course that we have taken to reforms as represented in the budget, companion documents and various other measures passed by this House and suggested by government in the past three years indicates that we are trying to take a rational approach and that we have in fact gone ahead farther than some of us realize.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, for a few days now we have been discussing the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) which has been called an expansionist budget. This budget obviously proves that the government is trying to reduce the taxes of a certain category of taxpayers, but I doubt that this will help the Canadian economy to any appreciable extent.

We are pleased that the Minister of Finance has accepted some of the suggestions of the parties of the opposition, especially the official opposition, which for almost two years now has been requesting the repeal of the 3 per cent surtax known as the social development tax. Hon. members will remember that last year we asked the minister to spur the economic growth of Canada by eliminating this 3 per cent surtax.

We have also asked, for many years, for the suppression of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials and we know just how much this could help the housing industry in Canada, especially in Quebec where people have an ever growing need of homes and low rentals.

Mr. Speaker, I think that Canadians in general should be grateful to the official opposition, and mainly to the leader of the opposition (Mr. Stanfield). When the minister of Finance introduced the white paper on tax reform, the leader of the Progressive Conservative party, that is the leader of the official opposition, has immediately undertaken a tour throughout Canada to denounce the disastrous aspects of this white paper. He has met with the representatives of social groups, he has delivered speeches and he has convinced Canadians that the application of the recommendations contained in the white paper would be disastrous for the Canadian economy.

Later, the Senate presented a report which contained extremely useful recommendations for the government.