

Income Tax Act

people live in our concrete jungles, one on top of the other when Canada is so rich in opportunity, economy and in geography in its hinterlands? There is no way in which this country will ever achieve its potential unless we encourage more people to leave the herd. I suppose we can call it the herd instinct, where everybody wants to be a part of the masses which seem to gather in the large concrete jungles of this country.

Until the government holds out some very real incentives for people to move north to develop our frontier, this country will not and cannot achieve the potential of which it is capable, that of being one of the truly great nations in the universe. It is a matter which lends itself to deliberate public policy, but the direction of the development in the north has been downhill. For example, in 1930 there were more farmers in the Northwest Territories than there are today. It is a deliberate policy of this government to stifle growth in the north and to force people to leave there, because it wants the area for some kind of great national park which is forever the domain of nature.

Canada cannot afford this kind of development. I am not saying that Canadians should rush up north and build massive infrastructures to rape the north of its resources. I am saying that with today's technology and knowledge about the way in which such areas can be developed in harmony with the legitimate concerns of environment and ecology, for example, we can develop our north in a way which will offer a much better future for the people who live there, a future in which they are treated equitably in terms of taxation and which will be beneficial to our country as a whole.

The factories and economies of the large cities of the south are totally dependent on the resources of the north. It is not fair or right that the only reason for going north is to rape that part of the country of its resources for the benefit of those who have a certain romanticism for living in the north but who are in no way interested in developing and populating that part of the country.

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Mr. Speaker, on entering into the debate on Bill C-54, an act to amend the statute law relating to income tax, this afternoon, I want to deal with the portion of the bill which affects the petroleum industry, the devastating effects of the energy bill and the contents of this bill, and the serious delays these bills will cause to Canada becoming self-sufficient in energy.

● (1550)

The budget, energy bill and this bill have been studied in great detail by many experts in all fields across Canada. I have yet to find a report favouring the contents of these bills, especially the energy package. I want to quote from a report out of Montreal last week which includes some comments by the new president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. I quote:

The federal budget and the National Energy Program have crushed the guarded optimism expressed by Canada's economists a year ago, says Stanley Roberts, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

'We've been pushed back into an economic slump and I don't expect we'll begin to climb out until the last half of 1981,' Roberts said at a seminar Thursday on government action and its effect on business. It was Roberts' first appearance in Quebec since he was named to head the national group.

'The energy program was designed to achieve certain goals', he said. 'However, something serious happened between the time the objectives were written and the time the details were put behind them because they just don't go together.'

The main reason the Liberals continually push this energy package is they feel it will catch the imagination of the Canadian people who have very strong feelings against oil companies and multinationals. The Liberals thought that if they introduced a program to nationalize the industry, it would do great things for them politically. This has completely backfired. It caught the imagination of Canadians all right. However, they are concerned because the government is not backtracking and is not prepared to make changes in its energy package and this tax bill. It is strictly for political motivation that all of this is being done. They think it is best for the Liberal party. It has nothing to do with what is best for Canada.

Mr. Roberts went on to say:

'The program is ill-conceived. No one—not a columnist, an economist or a political observer who has studied (it) and its implications—favors it. Even the people it purports to help have said 'no thanks.' It therefore must be stopped.'

Roberts, speaking to members of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce, also said Canadian 'oil prices must rise much more quickly if we hope to be effective in conserving our resources . . .'

In a question period later, however, he stressed that Canadian prices did not necessarily have to rise to world levels. 'What we want is a Canadian price that will keep the Canadian developer, the Canadian exploration program, up to level and will encourage the tar sands and heavy oil programs to go ahead.'

That, of course, is not happening. They are all grinding to a halt.

The brunt of his criticism, however, bore on the over-all energy policy proposed by the Trudeau government—'this mistaken plan,' as Roberts called it later.

Many drilling rigs are already idle because of it, he reiterated, and some have fled to the United States.

I will be going into those figures in more detail in a minute.

As for Canadianizing the oil and gas industry, the program 'fails miserably.'

It certainly has failed miserably. Just before the beginning of question period today, we heard some excellent statistics quoted by the hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker). He introduced a motion calling for condemnation of the government, pointing out that on Monday of last week oil trucks at Coutts, Alberta, leaving Canada were backed up for one mile. That does not have anything to do with an attack on multinationals or the big oil barons. That is Canadian workers leaving the country with their equipment. The hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills also pointed out that on Wednesday of last week 45 oil trucks of one company and 15 of another left Canada. That will have a devastating effect on Canada's economy. It will affect everybody, not just the oil barons and multinational companies. Imagine, trucks lined up for one mile leaving this country. What are the Liberals going to do about it? Absolutely nothing.

The budget, energy policy and this tax bill are certainly good for the economy—the economy of the United States. The