

Income Tax Act

accept the amendment introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). It was a pleasure to listen to the speech of the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), and I think the points he made were of concern to everyone in this country. I am sure that everybody is concerned about reducing the burden of taxation of low income Canadians. In many cases it appears that this government is only interested in saying "Merry Christmas" to them and forgetting about the consequences which may flow from the measure. I think it would like to regard low income Canadians as invisible citizens, so that it would not have to recognize their problems.

Yesterday was a banner day in the House of Commons. The hon. member for York Simcoe (Mr. Roberts) stood in his place and cried about the type of reporting carried on by the various newspapers across the country. The *Globe and Mail* for December 13 carries this report about what the hon. member for York Simcoe said at Thunder Bay:

Mr. Roberts recalled the long wrangle over tax reform that culminated last week in passage of the new tax legislation under closure, and said that it does not represent real tax reform at all. He said the Government has no concept of what sort of economy or industrial base it wants 10 years from now, and without that larger picture, real reform is not possible.

He said the same thing applies to the Competition Act and the development of policy on foreign investment.

I think that journalists should investigate to ascertain if these statements appearing in the *Globe and Mail* were actually uttered. Were these statements appearing under the by-line of *Globe and Mail* reporter, John Slinger, actually made at Thunder Bay, because I cannot disagree with the hon. member opposite in any way. I was surprised yesterday to see the hon. member stand up in the House and cry for about 15 minutes over something that was reported in the press. As a rule, when people spend that much time crying over something appearing in the press, there is more truth than fiction in the press report. It was most unfortunate seeing the hon. member crying and the blood running all over the nice green carpet. Somewhere, somebody must have gored him. Possibly he is a little worried about his present position as parliamentary secretary.

The amendment proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would mean, if accepted, that people with taxable incomes of \$500 would pay about \$10 in income tax, as opposed to the \$85 that they will pay under the government's proposal. I am sure that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) will be reasonable. If this amendment is accepted, many people in his constituency will be affected. If the House accepts this amendment, we shall not need to debate it any further and we could move on to more important items. Perhaps the government will wish to introduce some more amendments. If the parliamentary secretary will announce that the government will accept this amendment, we could dispose of this item and go on to debate something else.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Paproski: He is going to accept; he is going to accept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance rises on a point of order.

Mr. Mahoney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member would like to indicate the additional amendment he has in mind that would be more important than the one before the House now involving a half million dollar revenue reduction.

Mr. Skoberg: Are the many thousands of people in Canada who would be affected not important? Remember, the government would be doing this just before Christmas. We, on this side of the House, think that the amendment, if accepted, would bring about true reductions in the taxes of taxpayers. This would be a progressive measure. The income tax law would become more progressive. People earning lower incomes would pay less tax, no matter which way you look at it.

I admit that there are certain areas the parliamentary secretary is prepared to look at; I give him due credit for that, and for looking at one area which I shall mention shortly. However, unless he gives consideration to people who most urgently need it, he will be merely playing the big money game. So far, little consideration has been given in this taxation proposal to some people. I am sure that there is no need for me to expand further on the points which have been ably made by my colleague for Winnipeg North Centre as well as by other members who have spoken about this type of tax reform. Many of us agree that the present system really will not bring about tax reform. We suggest that laws and regulations must be framed to protect the individual, and our aim should be to bring about equity in taxation. The parliamentary secretary believes in playing with words and figures, as if that will bring about equity in taxation. Many of us do not think it will bring about reform.

An hon. member yesterday or the day before talked about the need for interpretive regulations. Yesterday, as well, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that a decision on foreign ownership was in the making or available, and that the government would introduce a policy in this regard. If the cabinet has made such a decision, it certainly has not been made public. We heard hon. members opposite talking about interpretive regulations. They would be, so to speak, the rules of the game, because without such interpretive regulations the vast number of pages of the bill before us would mean absolutely nothing. So far as I am aware, those interpretive regulations have not been introduced.

If one looks at the transcript of the hearings of the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee of the other place, one will see that over there they have been able to get to the Minister of Finance so to speak and do a little horse-trading. If the people of Canada had realized that this type of horse-trading had taken place, possibly they would have asked the other place to give consideration to special items that the people may wish to see passed. According to the transcript of the December 13 hearing of the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee of the other place, the Minister of Finance, after squirming somewhat, finally had to admit that the government contemplated bringing in further amendments after the beginning of the new year and that these would meet