

Income Tax Act

but how it will be administered. There are at least opportunities for problems to develop in this area. If the bill is passed in its present form, we will have to look carefully at the way it is administered in the future. An example of the type of administration to which I am referring concerns a man who died and left four houses in a small prairie town. The tax people came from Saskatoon and placed a value on these houses similar to the values in Saskatoon. To prove that these houses were not worth that much money, the heirs tried to sell them but could not even obtain a bid on the houses. In spite of this, the tax people insisted this was the value on which death duties would be paid. There has been some inequity in the administration of this particular law in the past. The officials did not use the market value because the people could not sell these houses at the values which had been placed upon them. Logically, the heirs should not have to pay the tax on that valuation, but that was the basis used. When we talk about capital gains, and what might happen when turning over a family farm from father to son, we are concerned because of the way in which the present law has been administered.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, this is the third reading stage of this famous bill and I believe it is my duty to speak on this occasion and to emphasize once more the inconsequence shown by this government in forcing the House to accept this badly worded, badly drafted and confused bill. In fact, this is a bill about which we still wonder to what degree it is going to be unfair to the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to say that one million Canadians will be exempted from income tax; it is a way of altering the real basic problems that this bill tries to solve. We must know what is meant by one million Canadians being taken off the rolls, which seems what the government is counting on in this bill.

Canadian families with a \$2,500 or \$3,000 yearly income and having three, four or five children are not paying any tax at the present time. When it is definitely established that these people are not paying any tax, I do not believe one can state that one million Canadians will be exempted from income tax. It is not true and I think it is intellectually dishonest to count on that. All the more so as another class of people, certain wage-earners, will derive so little benefit from this bill that I am wondering once more to what extent some people honestly count on such an argument, for most of the people who will get a tax decrease will save only \$15, \$20, \$25 per year. Is it worth emphasizing so much that a few thousand persons will pay \$15 less in tax this year?

Why not talk instead about the additional billion dollars that the government will collect under this new bill? You do not hear too much about this but in the final analysis this bill is simply the concrete and actual result of a series of mathematical acrobatics to go deeper in the pockets of the Canadian taxpayer. This is the kind of reform we are presently considering. So we have all the reasons in the world to oppose it.

• (4:30 p.m.)

First, we are opposed to the manner in which the government is trying to ram the bill through the House by a

[Mr. Thomson.]

set date. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely irrational. Here we are considering a bill of 732 pages when the usual bill might go up to 40 or 50 pages. This voluminous bill is equivalent to 25 or 30 normal bills. Since when is it against the rules to take the time required to study 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 bills? It is not because there are innumerable issues in a single bill that we should consider it with great speed, thoughtlessly and in great haste. Again, when the government is actually trying to convince the people of Canada that its action is appropriate because the time of the House is being taken up to debate such a bill, it is being dishonest. The whole population should be told what it is all about.

When a bill calls for so many changes on top of being so badly drafted and conceived it is quite normal to take the time necessary to bring in the required corrections. We have irrefutable proof of this— what would have actually happened to the clauses on co-ops, caisses populaires and credit unions if the opposition had not opposed vigorously those clauses dealing with taxation of caisses populaires? Did we not succeed in making the government understand and, at last, agree to amend these sections so as to make them more in line with the economic realities which those financial institutions represent?

This is a glaring example which shows that a study was required and that opposition action was becoming essential and the proof that we were right to insist on having other sections amended. If we have so much insisted on having them amended also, or on having their coming into force deferred, it is because we knew we were right. It is not because we are told that, from now on, we shall have one or two days to discuss this bill that we must agree with the government. To agree we were right in such a manner would be to show weakness and I think that this government is not showing strength but weakness. Because it cannot adequately defend its bill it would rather impose it. I think this is how the government is acting.

The dishonesty shown by the government not only in preventing hon. members from further discussion of this bill but—and this is the most terrible thing—in forcing the Canadian people to fight their way through this maze of sections on income tax is one way of laughing at them.

As indicated by the amendment under discussion, we must see in this bill the extraordinary difficulties that certain segments of our society, including our farmers, will meet from all sides. And when you are aware of their special situation and of the difficulties they are faced with, I feel that imposing on them new methods for computing their taxes amounts to moving backwards, to putting a spoke in the wheels of this country's agriculture, in other words to regressing, a policy which the government shall regret sooner or later.

Because the minister says that this bill has to come into force for the government to see how it works and how to amend it later, there is no need for us to pass it. His alleged guarantee will not convince us, nor the Canadian people, that this legislation is good.

Mr. Speaker, such arguments are seldom heard. In brief, the minister is telling us: we do not know exactly if this legislation is good; we think it is; in any case, if we put it into force, we shall see. I do not believe that a legislation