

Income Tax Act

Canadian products that the Canadian government could implement through an act of parliament for certain products whose producers are in deeper trouble. This leads me to mention briefly the plight of hundreds of milk producers, especially industrial milk producers, whose quotas have expired since November, December or last January. If the milk policy schedule is not changed very soon, milk producers will have to consider limiting their production until April 1. Yet, these producers have heavy commitments toward their credit unions, their banks, and all those who grant them credit to purchase dairy feed or farm machinery.

Some will say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Bellechasse keeps raising this matter. Indeed, and I am not ashamed of doing so because I am well aware of this problem and I would not want to see within a year or two our country running short of milk producers because of the present lack of foresight of the government. I keep meeting many young producers whom I have advised to buy their father's or their neighbour's farm rather than letting it be sold to strangers who are going to let fertile land lie fallow. There is talk about land conservation today. This should not be the exclusive concern of the Quebec government. We should all help out in conserving the land because whatever changes in government happen, whatever form our institutions may take in Canada or in the provinces, we will always need farmers to produce our food.

So, if we are aware of all that, I think it is time, Mr. Speaker—and that is what I am suggesting—the government considered carefully the advisability of granting a rebate on dairy products, let say on whole milk first since surpluses are used as industrial milk, and we know all the wrangling it has brought about last year. Whole milk producers were pitted against industrial milk producers and it is a serious matter to sow discord between members of a same family. That is all right as far as neighbours are concerned, but when people live in the same house or live on the revenues from the same industry or product, it is quite serious.

So, if it were decided to grant a discount on a quart of milk—someone pointed out to me recently that now with the metric system, it costs 52 cents. Before, milk was sold by the quart and it also cost 52 cents. So, with the new system, the consumer gets less milk for the same price. That makes no sense at all! So, the lady bought a quart of milk in a glass container and then took a carton containing a litre and poured the milk into it. And there was really a difference of a teacup. And then, if you buy four litres of milk for your family, it means that you bought four teacups less than what you paid for.

Here again it is the responsibility of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Allmand) to monitor the implementation of that change in the measurement of consumer goods that people must buy everyday.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us grant a subsidy as we did in 1972 under a minority government! The Canadian government, then in a minority, granted a 5 cent discount per quart of milk, and during the few months when that policy was implemented, \$181 million were distributed throughout Canada to promote

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

the consumption of milk and help Canadian consumers. The purchasing power of those who really need it was increased by \$181 million. This was possible in 1972, Mr. Speaker, under a minority government that was listening to the demands of the people and was still able to administer our country. Foreign governments did not meddle in our affairs because we had a minority government. But we did not have a minority parliament. At that time, parliament was assuming its true responsibilities as an inspiring force and a legislator while the executive was assuming its true responsibilities by implementing the will of parliament.

I am not afraid of a minority government, as I know it has been beneficial to our country.

Recently I heard on the CBC TV network that there might be an election in 1978. It is a possibility, but it is also possible that the outcome of that election will be a minority government. If this is the will of the people, there is no problem. We are supposed to live in a democracy, a government by the people and for the people. When I was a child, I heard Mackenzie King make a speech in Quebec City. Mackenzie King was not very fluent in French. He could say yes, no and thank you, and also welcome, but anyhow I was at the meeting he held at the Armouries and he said something I shall remember all my life.

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He said at the time: Never ask to live under a dictator, long live democracy—he knew it by heart and had practised for weeks. That was when he said: a government of the people, by the people and for the people. He concluded his speech by saying: That is what I want to give you.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I support Bill C-23, and my colleagues will probably do the same because we usually end up understanding each other. I hope that when the bill is referred to committee it will be amended as required and that the government will then implement them. I hope that the civil servants who will draft regulations after the bill has been passed will do so quickly in order that this legislation be in force as soon as possible. However, they should take care not to lose the real objective of Bill C-23.

I do not want to be unduly critical but sometimes, after we have considered a legislation and done our best to understand it, it happens that when people come to us for information and details we have to refer to the regulations made after enactment of the bill, but we find ourselves at a loss because they do not reflect what we did in parliament, far removed as they are from the legislator's thinking. I am not saying it is done on purpose but it does happen. And when the bill will be in force I do not want to have to say to businessmen who will want to benefit from the law that because of such or such regulation they cannot do this and they cannot do that. People think that we are not serious when, on the contrary, we should demonstrate to all Canadians we are really serious and responsible people who try to give their country the best administration so that our economy will operate at full capacity. After that effort has been made, Mr. Speaker, some people will still be