

spokesman and strongly insist that the Minister of Finance should reconsider his position. As for the answer that he should have given to the representatives of the 800,000 Canadian members on August 11 last, he should give it right now. He should review his position in that connection to enable caisses populaires, credit unions and the co-operative movement in general to develop and continue to serve Canada.

The heart of the matter is as follows: We have a choice to make as to the proposed tax reform. According to the Minister of Finance, the government is introducing tax reform in order to make the tax system more equitable, in respect of Canadian citizens as well as companies.

The government should not hesitate to change this system in order to protect the interests of Canadians. The basic problem is to know whether the tax system proposed by the Minister of Finance really preserves the interests of Canadians, or whether it will, on the contrary, result in a gradual disappearance of small businesses in Canada.

Is the proposed tax system likely to encourage small businesses, individuals who still believe in private enterprise, or is it, rather, going to discourage people who do their utmost in order to survive and to succeed?

Could it be that the tax system is rather a socializing measure designed to cause small businesses and co-operatives to disappear all the sooner? I must answer this question in the affirmative, because if one reads carefully clauses 135 and others which deal with the co-operative movement, one finds out that this government has no other purpose but to implant extreme socialism in Canada, by bringing about as fast as possible the disappearance of the right of private ownership for Canadians.

The Canadian co-operative movement is based on the wish of every person to be the owner. Indeed, each member is part owner of his co-op, can actively participate through his work, his savings, his sacrifices and his presence, and decide as to his co-op's future since he has voting rights.

There is, in the co-operative, another important principle that one must not neglect in considering this new legislation: it is that in a co-op, all members are equal and are not judged according to the thickness of their wallet, but rather on their value and their understanding of the co-operative movement.

• (4:10 p.m.)

That is why, Mr. Speaker, when one reads the tax proposals of the Minister of Finance, one soon realizes that the government, in putting large companies and co-operatives on the same footing, is obviously but in a devious way seeking to do away with small businesses and the feeling of ownership of co-operative members. That is a very serious matter, especially when we are going through an economic depression, even though it existed before the 10 per cent American surcharge was imposed. The government is using President Nixon's decision as an excuse for its lethargy, its total failure in the field of economics.

But, Mr. Speaker, one fact remains: the policy of the government of the right hon. Prime Minister has entailed shut-downs and bankruptcies in a great many Canadian

industries, in the riding of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) in that of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) as well as in other constituencies. One also finds that this backward and ineffective policy of this government brings about an increase in unemployment and decreased motivation among the population to participate in our national growth, since this is a disincentive policy instead of an incentive policy.

**Mr. Béchard:** This is sheer demagoguery!

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the tax policy and relates it to the ineffective policy of this government which was elected in 1968, it is then possible to understand the hidden though conspicuous intents of this government, namely eradicating the sense of ownership in order to control citizens better.

We will never build a country, Mr. Speaker, we will never build our country—

**An hon. Member:** Not with this type of speeches!

**Mr. Fortin:** —with this type of policy.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for this interruption, but I would be very grateful if you would kindly call to order the hon. government members who are deliberately being disrespectful.

**Mr. Béchard:** We are listening.

**Mr. Fortin:** They should at least have the kindness to listen, if they do not have enough heart to speak also.

As I was saying, this government has no economic policy to stimulate the economy and build this country, and the tax proposals show that the government is lost among its masses of papers and its endless inquiries.

They also show how important it is to warn the government, as objectively as possible, so that it may revise its positions and take into consideration the suggestions made by the co-operatives and the credit unions, in order to make of this tax measure something that will truly serve the interests of Canadians.

When in the crisis initiated by Mr. Nixon's decision the government puts \$80 million at the disposal of large companies to assist them provided they export to the United States over 20 per cent of their production, it acknowledges the principle of helping those companies to hold their own, in order to maintain the employment level and to promote private enterprise.

If this assertion is true for large companies, how truer for co-operative institutions and small enterprises which abound in Canada and which try to survive regardless of all the problems facing them. We know that Mr. Nixon's decision affects a great many Canadian industries and entails an enormous financial loss to Canada. But I will not be led to believe that that decision is the direct cause of the slump. That is not true.

The direct cause of unemployment and of many other economic problems in Canada is the lack of government policies designed to stimulate, intensify and encourage development of private enterprise in Canada. Furthermore, the government has no policies aimed at assisting consumers, who wield and use purchasing power to