

Income Tax

State for Small Business is a Member of the Government. Is the Minister being recognized as a private Member, or is he being recognized as the Minister for the Government replying to questions? Because the question really is that we have before us the Minister of State, who is the witness before this Committee, answering the questions of the Committee. Now we have a situation where another Member of the Government stands up, without any jurisdiction to handle this piece of legislation, and proceeds to become involved in it.

My point of order is this. We have to know from where he comes. Does he come as an ordinary Member? My position is that he is not entitled to be recognized in the Committee as an ordinary Member unless he is allowed to cross-examine his Cabinet colleague on the floor of the House, and I do not think that is right. Or is he being recognized as the Minister responding to a question, in which case it is not his portfolio? In neither case has this Minister the right to interfere in this debate at this point.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order—

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I want to resolve one issue at a time, if I may. The Minister has every right to participate in debate of the Committee of the Whole. We may do so as any other other Hon. Member does.

That matter is settled, but I was having some difficulty as to the relationship of the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Rural Development Incentives Act to which the Minister was referring, so I simply point out to him that there remains in issue whether or not the Minister's comments are relevant to the Bill before us.

If he would now care to take the floor, obviously it would be helpful if he could point out how these matters are relevant to the Bill and to the Clause, and then we could all proceed.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for recognizing my rights as a Member of Parliament. I do not hold it against the Hon. Member because he happens to be a Member of the Opposition. I fully support his position as a Member of the Opposition and I hope he stays a Member of the Opposition for a long, long while. On the other hand, he should not discriminate against me because I happen to be a Member of the Government. I have a right to speak on behalf of farmers and fishermen who are going to be hurt at the end of March unless certain legislation is passed. These are small businessmen. They are helped by the Income Tax Act. They are also helped by complementary Acts such as the Rural Development Incentives Act and the Small Businesses Loans Act. These are tax measures too, in a way, and that is the relevance, Mr. Chairman.

We are talking about support across the board that this Government and this Parliament provides for small business. That is the point that he is making. I am saying to the Hon. Member and to the Opposition that, if they are serious about giving that help, they will pass without any debate the Small Businesses Loans Act which expires at the end of March; they will pass without debate the Rural Development Incentives

Act; they will pass without debate the small business investment grant. If that legislation is not passed by the end of March, there will be no further help of that kind for small businessmen, including farmers and fishermen. That is the point.

The Deputy Chairman: Clause 8 in this Bill does have reference to the Small Business Development Bond, but I find that when I take the Minister's words at large, to me they do not seem to address themselves to Clauses 8, 9 or 128(12). However, we have arrived at the point where in any event the Minister appears to have completed his remarks. If someone wants me to rule, in fact, my inclination would be to rule that that was not quite in order.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, we will try to get back to Clause 8 and 9, but it would be nice to be able to ask the Minister of State for Small Business why, with three such important pieces of legislation on his personal plate as Minister, his House Leader is bringing in a betting Bill on Friday and a take-over-the-agricultural-industry Bill on Monday. Why is the Government priority in that direction when small businesses are hurting? It would be nice to ask him that question in light of his out of order intervention.

I come back to Clauses 8 and 9. Do we see this legislation and this particular Clause before us today because the Minister could not find assistance for the farm community, and could not get something passed through Cabinet? Are we bending this in the direction of farms because the Minister of Agriculture is falling down on the job?

• (1210)

Mr. Cosgrove: No, Mr. Chairman. I am surprised that the Hon. Member, with his experience in the House, would not know that he will have an opportunity in a very few minutes to raise any question he wishes of either the Minister responsible for small business or the Minister of Agriculture. The Hon. Member really is blowing hot and cold. He is speaking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time. He criticizes the Minister for making a statement and then raises a question about another Minister, knowing full well that the time to do that is in Question Period, not now when I am looking Clauses 8 and 9 perforce.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has gone out of his way to indicate that the change in the law is to allow unincorporated businesses to participate in the Small Business Bond. Can the Minister confirm that about 90 or 95 per cent of the take-out by unincorporated business is by farmers in trouble? Is that where the money is going?

Mr. Cosgrove: Mr. Chairman, I hope the Hon. Member will raise that question with the Minister of Agriculture so that he can use the hour in Question Period to deal with the numbers of different types of programs and assistance that the Government provides to the agriculture sector, including small farmers. It might be constructive.