

Excise Tax Act

ry economic times, but the one thing I notice from looking over the history of the development of this country in modern times is that the private sector has not been prepared on its own initiative to keep pace with world development. The private sector, notwithstanding all of the grants about which I spoke, has not been prepared to invest in Canada in order to keep pace with changing technology. Notwithstanding the grants for research and development which were made available through our tax dollars, the private sector has not been prepared to engage in proper research and development. And that is the way we must measure the performance of the private sector. It has not been aggressive in seeking new markets for its products. In the main, as a sector, the private sector has not been aggressive. It has in fact, to the contrary, steadfastly refused to go out and seek those markets.

I took part in a study which was conducted all across Canada. I spoke to numerous sector organizations about the need to seek markets outside of Canada for their products, but with few exceptions it was indicated to me that the private sector was content with the size of its business as it was. It was content to operate as a domestic supplier and it had no intention of moving into world markets. Those individuals in private business who did indicate that they were interested in doing so did not have the power in Canada to make the decision in any event. In the main, they represented branch plants of a multinational operation which was set up in Canada to meet Canada's domestic market requirements. They did not have a mandate nor did they have the authority to get a mandate to seek world markets.

Mr. Stewart: Exports are up 40 per cent in Ontario.

Mr. Deans: I thought I heard my colleague from the other side saying "That is absolute crap", which I want to point out is unparliamentary; but nevertheless it would be useful for the Hon. Member, if he does not believe me, to go out and find out for himself.

Mr. Stewart: Exports are up 40 per cent in Ontario.

Mr. Deans: Exports are up 40 per cent but not in manufactured goods.

Mr. Stewart: What about the auto pact, cars?

Mr. Deans: The auto pact is a peculiar situation which fluctuates from year to year and does not operate under an independent mandate in Canada. It operates as part of an international North American conglomerate structure.

An Hon. Member: For what?

Mr. Deans: If the Hon. Member wants to rise and make a speech, he may do so. But the majority of individual companies operating as a part of a branch plant operation, worldwide, do not have the authority to develop world markets.

Having said that, I have to ask where is this business confidence—I am not even asking about consumer confidence—going to come from? Where are those businesses

which refused during the good years—and we have had many of them—to seek out those alternative markets, to build the Canadian base, to develop the R and D potential and to become part of a world-scale operation? Where are they? Because that is what is required in order to achieve the goals set out by this Government. But they do not exist, in the main. What they would not do before, they will not do now.

We have given concessions upon concessions to the point where big business hardly pays any tax at all. We have now reached the point where big business can defer paying tax indefinitely so that perhaps it will pay tax 20 years or 30 years down the road, unlike the average worker who pays tax by the week. We have already made it possible for big business not to pay for almost everything it does. What more can we give? The fact of the matter is that we can give no more. Because we can give no more we can hardly expect, based on its record, that big business is suddenly going to rush forward and embrace this new requirement of "confidence" which this Government believes ought to be in existence in this land.

There is nothing I would like better than at the end of this four-year period to see that the Government's measures have worked and everyone in Canada is working, that there is growth and everyone can look forward with some degree of optimism to prosperity and enjoyment of life and to be able to provide for their families. I would love to see that happen. That is motherhood. We would all like that. However, we cannot have that if we are going to rely on the corporate sector which steadfastly refuses to operate on Canada's behalf. We cannot have that if we rely on big business to change its ways; it has had ample opportunity to do so and has refused at every turn. Why do you think we have had to have so much research done in the public sector? Because the private sector refused to undertake it.

Mrs. McDougall: I'm listening.

Mr. Deans: I know you are listening. It is not doing much good, though. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that there has been the opportunity given. We have tried that and it has not worked. Just to restate the requirement over and over again is not going to make it any more acceptable than it was in the beginning. I say this because I believe that the Government is placing all of its eggs in one basket. It was said earlier that everything which has been tried by this Government has either been spoken about or tried by other governments in other parts of the world, and in fact was even tried here in Canada some years ago. The consequence of those actions being pursued was that massive unemployment was created.

Our mandate, for heaven's sake, is to try and take care of the people who are here today; to make sure that the opportunity is there for them; to make sure that they do not have to pay a price far beyond what would normally be expected by the balance of society; and to attempt to lay the groundwork for a future for the next generation and the ones which follow. That is not what is being done by this Government through this legislation or through its economic statement.