I do not think that passage of this Bill is in the best interests of the taxpayers of the country. It is not in the best interests of the farming community of the country and I cannot support the Bill in its simple form.

Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the motion of the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) with great consideration and understanding. I know the problems that Section 31 of the Income Tax Act has created for a large segment of Canadians who made the extra effort by trying to establish businesses in the farming sector.

The motion proposes that we consider the advisability of repealing Section 31. Here again, the Hon. Member has clearly shown a responsible role by saying that we should consider its repeal. I think that this clearly points out that we on this side of the House are not trying to provide an avenue for those who are wealthy to escape paying taxes. We are merely trying to give those who want to enter into the farming community a chance.

In the area in which I live, which is part of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, the price of land is very high. It is very demanding financially to enter into those kinds of enterprises. There is no other way to do so unless one is born with a silver spoon in one's mouth. Most of the people who want to enter into the farming community are born in poverty like most of the rest of us are.

On my own farm, there was a young man who was driving a chicken-catching truck who wanted to enter into the dairy business. He would never have been able to enter into that business had some form of reasonable taxation not taken effect. With Section 31 remaining a part of the Act, this man is really going to struggle.

The Hon. Member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Clark) mentioned the matter of jobs. If one man is taken off the job and goes to a farm, a job opening is created. The lack of jobs is the biggest issue facing Canadians today. There are no jobs, whether it be for the young, the old, or anyone.

• (1750)

In the Budget speech, the Government promised to reconsider Section 31 of the Income Tax Act. What has the Government done? It has done absolutely nothing. Here it is saying that it is the protector of the minority—the small businessman and what have you. But, who does it worry about? It worries about the big businessman. The most unbelievable presentation that I have heard in the House was given by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie). He did not even speak to the Bill. He did not consider the small guy. I do not know what he considered. He was speaking about the Amazon and Brazil.

This is an important issue. The context of entering into the farming community today has totally changed from what it was in prior years. Elderly people who must retire can no longer hand their farms over to their children. The children must purchase the farms so that the elderly can maintain a reasonable standard of living. In most cases, those young Canadians must go out and perform work other than the work which they perform on their farms. It has been proven time after time that the only way to do it is to hold down a job and farm x number of hours each day as well.

I believe that the Government has a responsibility to Canadians, and to small entrepreneurs who are trying to break into the farming industry. Without seriously considering the Bill put forward by the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West, we will achieve nothing.

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker. I have no concern about speaking this Bill out. However, I would not feel that way if the motion called for changes which would make it possible for small farmers and part-time farmers to get a better break and make it possible for them to survive. However, that is not what the Bill proposes. The Bill proposes that Section 31 of the Income Tax Act be repealed. That leaves it wide open for anyone to purchase a farm or a piece of property in order to obtain a great tax write-off. They do not really have to be concerned about farming at all.

One thing that bothers me about this Bill is that it has been characteristic of the Tory Party in the debates in the last several months to always be worried about the person who is not paying taxes. They should be looked after nicely and we should treat them well! I can truthfully say that in the last three or four months, there has been a great deal of concern in my community by the people who are earning wages and whose taxes are being paid at source that they will be forced to pay more and more taxes if more and more ways are found in which other people do not have to pay taxes. Therefore, I think that the deletion of Section 31 is one way to create a situation in which some people could beat the game and other people would have to pay more.

Taxes are a zero sum game. If there are segments of our society which are not paying their fair share, then those whose income comes from wages and who pay their taxes at source will have to pay more. I think the people in my constituency of Thunder Bay-Atikokan and the community in between are getting a little annoyed about the idea that there is this great inequity in the taxation system. This Bill is one way to create that inequity.

What are we going to do? The Tories are talking about the terrible deficit and how they want to reduce that deficit. What do they do? They say: "Let us make it possible for anybody to buy a farm, do what he wants with it and write his losses off". They do this without any compunction at all. They are not interested in farming. One of the consequences of this kind of measure—and there is evidence in the United States to suggest that this is true—is that it will increase the value of farmland, and it will put it in the hands of people who are only interested in using that land for a tax write-off. They are not interested in the kind of food production we need. This is the kind of thing which is happening.

I realize that there is a problem. However, Section 31 is there to solve that problem. If the Tories had submitted an