

member of the Government should do. That is the tradition on this side of the House. This Party encourages its members to put ideas forward and not hide them under a bushel basket as is done by members of the Opposition. I am not afraid to put my ideas forward for scrutiny although some Members condemn me for doing so. I would turn that condemnation around and point it back at the Opposition whose members will not put their ideas forward for scrutiny. The Minister has put forward ideas for simplification of the tax laws but he has not felt compelled to keep them quiet. The Minister and his predecessor have greatly increased the consultation process involved in budget making and have made references to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs not only of their Ways and Means motions, but of measures that involve policy.

In the last session there was a reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs to consider the simplification of the small business tax system. That does not seem to be the action of a Minister who is afraid of new ideas. In this Party we are not afraid of new ideas. Our members are free to put forward their ideas for comment or criticism, and Ministers listen.

Mr. Gamble: But they do nothing.

Mr. Evans: The Hon. Member should look at Bill C-139 and at the Ways and Means motions that led to it. He will see that the Minister of Finance changed the Ways and Means motions substantially in response to the ideas, criticisms and comments made by members of the Committee. He listened and he changed the Bill. The consultation process worked in that case and it has worked with the business community and all sorts of groups in the private sector and other levels of Government. In this way the Minister found new means of achieving his objectives.

I think the proposals are radical and show a new approach. As a member of this Party I feel free to do that. The proposals have been well received not only by members of the business community but by members of this Party and by the Government. I look forward to being able to put forward even more ideas in the future and to having them incorporated into the tax legislation of this country.

● (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Debate

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—EAST GERMANY—DIPLOMATIC
RECOGNITION—GOVERNMENT POSITION. (B) PROTECTION OF
CANADIAN CITIZENS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, I rose in my place yesterday to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) whether he would confirm that the Government is negotiating diplomatic relations with East Germany, the German Democratic Republic. To my surprise he said he could not confirm that. Someone else mentioned at the time that maybe he would deny it, which very significantly he chose not to do.

Frankly, I was really quite surprised by his answer because I know that there have been discussions with that government for at least three years, possibly more, regarding that eventuality. I am aware that those discussions are now reaching the latter stages, and there is some discussion about the nature of the Embassy and so forth. Therefore, I am first of all concerned about why the Prime Minister would deny it. I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary, or whoever is going to answer on behalf of the Prime Minister, is going to confirm the denial or correct the record and state what actually is going on, that in fact the Government is going to establish diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic.

My concern stems from what I think is an opportune moment to do some hardnosed negotiating with that country on behalf of Canadian citizens who were born in East Bloc countries. As members will know, the record is pretty clear, pretty blatant as a matter of fact, with respect to Czechoslovakia. It is a widely established European custom that citizens do maintain dual citizenship. If they come to North America, for example, the country of birth does not necessarily relinquish its claim on the nationality or citizenship of a person who may have in the meantime established Canadian citizenship. I recognize the limitations on the ability of this Government with respect to that issue. No Canadian Government can tell Czechoslovakia or East Germany, or Italy for that matter, that they cannot require dual citizenship. That is beyond our mandate and I am not asking for the impossible. However, I am saying that if we are negotiating with one of those countries to establish diplomatic relations, we can demand some other rights and guarantees for Canadian citizens.

For example, members will know that it is a crime in East Bloc countries to leave those countries and come to the West. Those countries demand payment for the social services provided to the people, payment for the withdrawal of military service and so forth. Therefore, leaving the East Bloc country of birth is branded as a criminal offence. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that now is an opportune time to score some points with those countries.

It is understandable—not acceptable but understandable—that we are in this dilemma now with East Bloc countries whose diplomatic relations were worked out 30 or 35 years ago. At that time we did not have the experience of history, of knowing how communist countries were going to react to Canadian citizens. We know how Czechoslovakia treats Canadian citizens. We know, as my colleague for Esquimalt-