

Income Tax

real estate and income taxes and, for that matter, the rising rentals. I do not suppose there are any members from urban areas who do not receive almost daily cries of anguish from those suffering from this situation.

I think the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) is to be warmly commended for bringing in this resolution, I believe not for the first time, and for bringing this human urban problem to the attention of the House. I am not completely satisfied about the limits he proposes. I notice all that is being asked is that the government should give consideration to this matter. The government is not being asked to legislate in this regard. Certainly I think we in this party can support the resolution, although as I said I am not quite happy about the \$500 deduction as the overall amount. As I read the resolution, this \$500 would be deductible from the tax and not from the taxable income. I suspect some people might be beneficiaries in this regard who do not need to be beneficiaries and who are more able to pay their proper real estate and income taxes. I think that should be looked into. I think the limit of the benefits to be given should be considered. I should like to hear what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) has to say about the effect of this proposal, although after having heard him I might disagree with him.

I would suggest to the hon. member who introduced this resolution there is another aspect in respect of the exemption which should be looked into. I have in mind the giving of an incentive through income tax deduction or exemption to those who improve their houses. One reason for the so-called decay or deterioration of housing in urban areas is the fact that the cost of repairs is a tremendous burden. With the tax and other burdens many owners feel they are unable to maintain their houses at proper standards. I think the matter of an exemption in respect of those home owners who spend money on repairing existing housing should be considered. The Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing is not here, but I never like to let an opportunity pass without saying in respect of the whole field of housing management that attention should be paid to the question of rehabilitating the existing stock of housing as against the necessary but not more important question of building more public housing, in particular for those in the lower income brackets.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we in this corner—perhaps I should not speak for the whole corner because I might easily be repudiated for adopting too wide a constituency, and therefore perhaps I should say we in this party—think this resolution is worthwhile because it deals with a vitally important subject. It aims in the right direction in using our tax laws to assist and benefit those who need it most. We think this is an eminently proper subject for discussion. If this resolution is passed, it might well be referred to the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs so they can examine the matter and suggest alternative proposals to do what we know is of basic importance if there is to be a just society in this country, and that is to relieve the burden on the small home owner and the small income tax payer of this country.

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, it seems that this motion has two objects: one is to help the citizen with his problems in financing his house, and the second is to bring about a more equitable Income Tax Act or a reformed tax act. While I am sympathetic to both goals, I do not know whether this motion is the best way of accomplishing these ends.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Here comes the hatchet.

Mr. Allmand: I am listening to the very interesting comments of my friends in the opposition and I will deal with them a little later.

Mr. Alexander: With the oh, oh's?

Mr. Allmand: I agree fully that many Canadians are having difficulty in financing their housing. They are having difficulty with their mortgage payments and their residential and school taxes. But, as I said, I have doubts as to whether this type of motion will best help these people. Last year the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) had a similar motion on the order paper but, if I remember correctly, he did not have the \$500 maximum. He is nodding that he did. Several years ago I spoke on a motion such as this in which there was no maximum of \$500 and which did not apply to rental. At that time I objected to the motion because I felt that the people who needed help most were not getting it. For example, those who had \$100,000 or \$50,000 homes were getting much larger deductions