

Income Tax Act

Reserves Act. This has been a holdback and has been accumulating for a year. Surely the warning of recent elections across Canada, especially since the Liberal party in the western provinces has all but disappeared, must be plain. If members of the government have any political sense at all they ought to be aware that this is a major storm signal and that it does not auger well for the future national stature of the great, traditional Liberal party.

The Prairie premiers under the initiative of the Hon. Duff Roblin a few years ago organized what has become known as the prairie provinces economic council. From time to time the premiers of the three prairie provinces get together to discuss problems of mutual concern and to decide on policies which will improve the general economic condition of their provinces. It is significant, Mr. Speaker, that recent meetings of the prairie provinces economic council, or of the premiers' economic council have more and more become complaint sessions in which council members have complained against the inexplicable and incomprehensible policy initiatives, or lack of them, on the part of the federal government in dealing with special problems of the prairie economy.

• (5:20 p.m.)

I wish to pinpoint some of these problems that will be exacerbated if this legislation is implemented, particularly if the whole process is carried out in haste. The government has failed to introduce a tax reform bill that integrates the taxing functions of the resources of the three levels of government. Surely it is elementary in this country that tax reform which hopes to achieve a basic reform must co-ordinate with the taxing responsibilities and functions of the provincial governments. There is nothing in the bill that provides for this basic necessity.

The second fundamental inadequacy with regard to provincial responsibilities in this matter is that the bill reduces, rather than expands, the tax bases of the provinces. The whole matter of constitutional reform is another of the initiatives of this government. Over the past three years we have been talking about constitutional amendments with increasing intensity. There has been a parliamentary committee going from community to community and city to city with this question. It has been pointed out that the problem is economic, not constitutional; the provinces do not have sufficient funds to meet their obligations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. He may continue only with the unanimous consent of the House. Does the House give unanimous consent to the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) continuing his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): There does not appear to be unanimous consent.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, could we have it on the record that the government has refused to give us time to discuss this bill at this stage?

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The Chair can only abide by the rules. There was not unanimous consent and the Chair can only recognize the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters).

Mr. Dinsdale: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I regret that hon. members will not allow me to complete my remarks with regard to the difficult position in which this legislation places the western provinces in particular, but I think the answer of the west—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The hon. member has made his point of order. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Timiskaming.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, for a long time the Canadian public has been faced with the proposition of tax reform. All the discussions that have taken place, including the Carter commission, the Gordon commission and the Benson white paper, have raised a great deal of controversy in the minds of the Canadian public as to what tax reform should be implemented in this country and what the tax structure should be in terms of equality between the rich and those not nearly so affluent. As other members have pointed out, this has cost the taxpayers a great deal of money.

Looking at the size of the amendments now before us and examining the effect of those reforms, one wonders what it is all about. If these tax reforms were general enough to affect the vocal segments of our economy, I am sure the general public would demand equality as between the large corporations and families with two or three children. They would demand that the tax structure would do the things which they felt were necessary. I am sure they would also demand some say in the way matters are handled on their behalf. They would also say that many of the expenditures supposedly made on their behalf are really not made on their behalf but for others who do not need that kind of consideration.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) objected to the Conservative amendment on the basis that it was a delaying tactic. He was not doing this in opposition to the amendment but making a plea for a job that he had previously and to which he might return. He was interested in a number of changes. Surely he did not intend to say that the tax proposals that were before us in June had any relation to the present situation.

I often disagree with the Conservative party because I do not understand where they are going. It is very easy to watch the Liberals. They make all kinds of noise, such as they have done on this occasion. They present all the opportunities to get everyone stirred up and they give the least necessary to win the next election without hurting any of their friends in the process. That is the difference between a Liberal and a socialist. I believe there should be a certain amount of principle involved. Either you believe in tax reform and try to do something about it, or you are just looking toward the next election and the cheapest way of becoming elected on the taxpayers' money. That is certainly shades of Mackenzie King. I was interested in the new CBC series on Canadian content, but what do they have in the background to satisfy the Liberals? They have a beautiful, big picture of Mackenzie King. Many