

Income Tax Act

funds which came from the estates of Sir James Dunn and Sir Izaak Walton Killam by way of taxation.

The suggestion to let taxpayers support public charities and then deduct the money will not solve the problem. I want to give the taxpayers the right to participate directly in the reduction of the national debt. I do not trust the Government to take the taxpayers' funds and use those funds to pay for other government services and at the end of that process reduce the national debt or the annual budget deficit. That may not happen, and I cite the Canada Council as an example of what happens when you set out to fund an activity separately. You end up spending over \$50 million of taxpayers' money on the services provided.

Does this mean that I am not in favour of the work and activity of the Canada Council? Certainly not. My constituency, my province and my part of Canada benefit in great measure from the existence of the Canada Council, and I do not deny that at all. I just want to put the whole matter into focus. Once something gets started in government, it is not only hard to stop it, it is hard to bring it under any kind of sensible control.

Let me say in passing, however, that I find it rather annoying, as do other Members of Parliament, I suspect, that the Canada Council, through the arts and cultural community in Canada, has objected so strongly to the reasonable request of the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) to curb its budgetary requirements by \$3.5 million, especially when the Canada Council is spending \$15 million on its administration expenses and it could only reduce those by \$1 million. In fact, as I understand it, the \$3.5 million by which the budget was to be reduced has been watered down to approximately \$2.5 million. The end result is that grants made by the Canada Council in the next fiscal year may be reduced by as little as \$1.5 million. Yet, the hue and cry goes out.

I grant to any Canadian the right to make public whatever objection he can muster to Government about expenditure reductions that affect him in a direct way. However, as I said before, the whole matter must be put into context. On the one hand, we have a national debt approaching \$200 billion, a budgetary deficit on an annual basis approaching \$36 billion and, on the other hand, we have a group in Canada objecting to a cut of approximately \$2.5 million in a budget that has grown, since its inception in 1957, to \$72 million.

The Canada Council, in its inception, was never intended to expend taxpayers' money. This is what happens. You end up apologizing, as a representative of the people in Parliament, for something that should have been done years ago by a responsible government so that we would not have this situation today.

If I stand before Canadians and before the House of Commons asking for a change in the Income Tax Act that will allow Canadians to enter into the financial vaults of the Government, as it were, and put their money down to reduce the national debt, I do not apologize for that. I think that is giving Canadians an opportunity that they never had before. I

suspect there are some Canadians who would like to take advantage of that.

Let me consider that point for a moment. While the Government is going through the process of establishing financial responsibility in Canada for the benefit of Canadians, we receive a certain amount of support from organizations like the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and others concerned with the status of the business community and the state of the Canadian economy. They recognize collectively and individually, as groups and taxpayers, that measures must be taken to reduce the Government's expenditures that have led to massive annual deficits and have resulted in the massive national debt. Everyone recognizes that, but when the chips are down and the steps are taken, when the budgets are cut and individuals are affected, they back off. They do not support these measures.

I simply want to say in that context, that it is easy to break the will of a politician and it is easy to break the will of government. Why should we, as individual Members of Parliament or collectively as the Government of Canada, take the measures that are necessary and at the same time incur the broad criticism of important sectors of the Canadian population? Why should we do that? Why don't we just borrow more money at current interest rates and pile up a bigger deficit and bigger national debt in order to please everyone in Canada and have ourselves elected in four years' time?

We do not want to do that because that is exactly what the Liberals have done for 16 years. That is why they were not elected by the people of Canada in September, 1984, and that is why the Progressive Conservative Party was elected as the Government of Canada. We pledged individually and as a group to take the kind of action that was essential to deal with this financial problem.

At the same time we recognize, as concerned persons, that if we take that action the result will be an improved economy that will, in turn, benefit Canadians, because the major problem in Canada is, has been, and will continue to be unemployment. The plight of Canadians who are unemployed does not go out of the mind of any Member of Parliament. We see it on a day to day basis, in the food line-up in larger cities and in the line-ups at the Manpower offices and unemployment insurance centres. We never want to lose sight of our mission to assist people who are unemployed in Canada, the over 1.5 million Canadians and hundreds of thousands of others who are no longer counted.

We are not reducing the national debt simply for the sake of a financial exercise. We are doing it to get the Canadian economy in shape so that the engine of growth will create the activity that creates jobs and, in that way, lead to the ultimate goal of the reduction of unemployment in Canada.

When you introduce a motion in the House of Commons that, in simple terms, amends the Income Tax Act to permit and to encourage taxpayers to participate directly in the process of reducing the national debt, you have a lot of things in mind. What I have in mind is a subject that we seldom hear spoken about by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) in the House of Commons, that is, unemployment in Canada. It