

Income Tax Act

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières has never understood anything about that. He says that money does not grow on trees, that we must get it from the pockets of citizens. Has the hon. member for Trois-Rivières a formula to put money back into the pockets of taxpayers? You know how to get the money, not how to give some back. You will never find a way. I do not know why the hon. member for Trois-Rivières cannot understand the economic situation.

I do not know whether it is from partisanship or self-interest, but he ignores the whole population, their poverty and their hardships, and he pays no heed to the forthcoming revolution which will soon be upon us because we have not kept our eyes open and have not taken up our responsibilities.

That is where we are going. The so-called social development tax should be abolished. It should be replaced by a dividend to be paid to every citizen. This would be a welcome measure, seen from another angle, if the minister were to say: A 2 per cent discount or dividend will be paid to all workers earning less than \$6,000. The minister would then be commended.

Never in the history of the old parties, Grits and Tories alike, have they thought of that. And those who suggest it are considered fools, unfamiliar with logic, and walking on their head instead of on their feet.

In my opinion, those who walk on their head instead of on their feet are the two old parties that have led us to our downfall since confederation. Canada is doomed, it is on the brink of bankruptcy. As a matter of fact, the citizens, the municipalities, the provinces, everybody is on the verge of bankruptcy. This is where you have led us, dear representatives of the old parties, Liberals and Conservatives, who are applying the same solution. You never wanted to do anything else but to embarrass us and to walk upside down.

● (5:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Chairman, first I should like to make a few points that I do not think have been made so far in the debate. I was both shocked and astounded last fall when the Minister of Finance brought in the so-called social development tax. I was shocked and astounded because I think it is one of the most regressive types of taxation he could possibly have introduced. It is but one example of the type of philosophy behind the government today, a government that has this

[Mr. Latulippe.]

philosophy not only in the field of finance and taxation but in all other areas and jurisdictions.

I must also say that I was mildly amused but somewhat horrified by the remarks made by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières. I must say that I find it difficult to understand his position even though he may actually believe what he said. It is no wonder that many young people in our society are becoming very frustrated with the way things are going. It is no wonder they are feeling restless. They want many social and economic changes. They want equity, they want equality of opportunity, and they want some say over the way their lives are going and over the decisions that are being made in our society. So I must say I was quite appalled when I heard the member from Trois-Rivières make some of the statements he made in the house today.

I have made the comment that the social development tax is very regressive. It is a 2 per cent tax on taxable income up to \$6,000. A person with a taxable income of \$6,000 pays just as much as members of parliament who make \$18,000 a year. He also pays as much as a person who is the president of a huge corporation and makes \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$100,000 a year. This is a regressive tax, and it is especially so in light of the poverty in Canada, with western farmers merely subsisting in many cases. This is something that should not be happening in today's society.

As a matter of fact, I believe this tax represents the Robin Hood theory in reverse, when we take money from the lower and middle income classes in this way. It is a very regressive tax and should be removed immediately.

What is social development? We have to develop our country in many ways socially, but we should not do it by imposing a tax upon the people in the lower and middle income groups. We should do it by providing these people with opportunities to improve their lot, to escape from poverty, and by giving them cultural and academic opportunities. We are not doing that.

I often ask what the priorities of the government are. What are they? Are they human priorities or are they materialistic priorities? The Minister of Finance, for example, brought down a budget last night and forecast a surplus of \$250 million. In view of that fact he should have removed this tax. If he did not want to do that he could have done many other things. He could have helped the