

Income Tax Act

competitive situation. Productivity figures are similarly worth noting. We have seen 40 per cent growth over the past ten years, a considerably better record than that achieved in the United States, a country often held up as a country we might follow. Here is an indication that we have performed significantly better than our neighbours to the south. Yes, there are soft spots in the economy, but the important thing is that Canadians under this government have not lost their will to work and are sharing the benefits.

It is this positive approach to the problem confronting us which will receive, ultimately, the support of voters across the land. There are other like items in this list of achievements and I shall turn to them later.

From 1969 to 1976, the average income of Canadians increased 25 per cent in real terms. Personal disposable income per capita increased by 118 per cent in that period, during the Trudeau years. Real per capita disposable income—that is, what is left after allowing for inflation and other relative factors—rose by nearly 52 per cent, more than double the increase in the United States. Even when the same test is applied on a “per employee” basis, disposable income rose by 23 per cent as against 12.3 per cent in the United States. Mr. Speaker, we do not hear these figures which Canadians ought to hear about. Hopefully the media will be sufficiently responsible to make sure they do.

The conclusion is clear. By working together—the federal government and the provinces, the public and the private sectors—we have coped with inflation and with the world economic crisis, not painlessly but with greater success than most other countries. Canadians have not only kept pace but are better off than they were ten, five or even one year ago. During the decade to which I have referred, the number of Canadians living below the poverty line has been cut dramatically to less than half the figure in 1968 when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) took over the leadership of the party. Mr. Speaker, these are not unsubstantiated claims. This is not wishful thinking on the part of representatives on this side. They are facts, and I believe it is important they should be put into the record.

There are so many examples I could use in accentuating the positive that it is necessary to be selective. Reference was made by the previous speaker to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. I wonder if he realizes that between 1973 and 1976, the peak period of crisis, Canada had the third highest rate of growth in the western world—not a bad accomplishment in a difficult period. The OECD has forecast that this year Canada's economic performance will again outstrip that of such countries as Germany. We shall outstrip France and Britain but lag somewhat behind the United States and Japan. The OECD goes on to say that Canada's real economic growth will be second only to that of Japan and our inflation rate the third lowest after Japan and Germany.

Unfortunately, this is not the way we hear the story from the other side of the House. And very often this is not the way the media present the picture, though there are responsible

[Mr. Martin.]

articles written quite frequently in the papers paying attention to the positive side of our achievements. Needless to say, they are not picked up by members across the way—I doubt whether they ever get beyond the front pages. All their concentration each morning is centred upon scanning those pages to determine what their program is to be for the crucial hour between two and three o'clock.

According to the most recent figures available to OECD, Canada with a per capita income of \$8,400 comes third among the major industrialized countries. The U.S. is in fourth place, some \$500 behind. Again, this is not wishful thinking, not speculation, but fact reported by an independent organization. This is in sharp contrast to the wild and woeful meandering of the groups opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks by summarizing a few of the areas in which perhaps we have failed as a government. Perhaps we have been so preoccupied with governing the country, looking ahead and coming up with positive solutions, that we may have failed adequately to report the kinds of accomplishments which have indeed been achieved. If, indeed, that is our failure, it is not a bad place at which to have failed. We have done the job, but perhaps our communication back to the people has not been as good as it might have been. It is obvious, of course, that we cannot count upon people opposite to help us in this regard. We have seen enough of their doom and gloom attitude to have the distinct feeling that members on this side are going to be much more conscious of our accomplishments in the weeks to come and will make a greater effort to get the message across this great country.

Here are some points I would like to make. We have the largest number of people working than we ever have had before. This, in itself, is not a bad statistic. It is a very important statistic. We have a larger percentage of population employed than at any previous time.

An hon. Member: What about the unemployed?

Mr. Martin: There you are, Mr. Speaker. I talk about the employed—a figure in the region of 90 per cent—and yet we hear the question: What about the unemployed? Of course we are concerned about the unemployed. Why do we have unemployment insurance programs? Why have they been constantly revised by this government in order to make them more meaningful? It is because we care. But we also care about the opportunities for the 92 per cent and more who are employed. I think they are very important as well.

We have the largest ever growth of income. We have the largest ever real income. We have the largest ever average income. More new jobs are created annually than ever before. More students are inclined to seek employment. There are more people in the average family unit who are employed. Certainly we can wish to do better. Our aim is to continue to do better.