

Taxation Reform

the whole lousy can of worms, if I may use that expression; that the members of the committee like what they see and that they have certain recommendations to make? I think Your Honour can take some parliamentary notice of what the Minister of Finance has been saying in various parts of the country, which is something to this effect, "We are going to have everybody look at this white paper. We will send it to a parliamentary committee. We will be to some extent guided by what the committee may say about it. We will also refer it to other people in the country".

In other words, the Minister of Finance is saying, "Here is a paper. Take it, look at it, chew on it, and come back with some recommendations." I have given the Minister of Finance more credit than he is entitled to; I note the motion is in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald), not the Minister of Finance.

Consequently, when considering the white paper we, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, say there are some things in it which we like. Perhaps it is medicine which the country must take to pay for some of the stupid, past actions of the government. We may say that certain tax changes should be made. But with respect to certain parts of the white paper, we say that there are not the incentives which should be the founding and basic motive of any tax proposal, but there are disincentives.

As an aside, let me say I think we have had enough of this government instructing committees to do things. We think it is about time the House of Commons instructed some committees, and we say we should instruct this committee to develop alternatives to those proposals which are disincentives. We are not contending that the committee should be instructed to develop alternatives to the white paper—God forbid! We are saying the committee should be given instructions to develop, and I presume to report to the House, alternatives to some of the proposals which, in our opinion, constitute disincentives.

I am not allowed to enlarge on this argument. In any event, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) made a tremendous case and established beyond any measure of doubt, except for those who are partisan, that there are disincentives in the white paper. Under these circumstances, I submit that what we are doing falls within the provisions of citation 201 of Beauchesne, which reads:

The object of an amendment may be to effect such an alteration in a question as will obtain the
[Mr. Baldwin.]

support of those who, without such alteration, must either vote against it or abstain from voting thereon.—

Speaking for myself, I would have the greatest difficulty voting for the motion, because in the absence of some instructions to the committee I fear the reference of the white paper may well be a waste of time. I would be far more inclined to vote for the motion than I am at the present time if there were added to it an instruction to the committee to develop some alternatives. I suggest we must read into the amendment an instruction to the committee to put forward in its report to the House some alternatives to the proposals contained in the white paper.

If a simple, ordinary, harmless amendment of this nature falls beyond the scope permitted hon. members of this House in dealing with a proposal by the government to send a document to a committee for consideration and report, then there is really very little we can do at all. There are a number of citations dealing with this point, but I am sure Your Honour has looked at them. I suggest to Your Honour that we are brought squarely within the ambit of citation 201. We are offering an amendment which will make this proposition far more palatable to the members of our party.

Hon. Marcel Lamberi (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I find myself at a disadvantage. Although Your Honour did indicate you had some reservations, you did not say in which area you might find the amendment repugnant to the rules. I am sure Your Honour would not expect hon. members to argue in a vacuum, or to try to cover the whole spectrum in the hope that some of the objections they raise might anticipate some of Your Honour's reasoning. I have some difficulty understanding what the objection is here. Is Your Honour bothered about whether it is a substantive motion requiring notice? I am not, of course, questioning Your Honour—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I might intervene to tell the hon. member that there are a number of things that I thought might be doubtful in connection with the amendment. However, the hon. member for Peace River, who is an expert on the procedures of the House of Commons, put his finger on the difficulty and without question went straight to the point and put forward an argument in support of the acceptability of the amendment. In doing so he argued exactly the point about which I do have some reservations. If the hon.