

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE FOR CHILD TAX CREDIT

The House resumed from Friday, November 3, consideration in committee of Bill C-10, to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a child tax credit and to amend the Family Allowances Act—Mr. Chrétien—Mr. Laniel in the chair.

The Chairman: Clause 1 is under consideration.

On clause 1—

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, before I defer to my colleague, the hon. member for York-Simcoe, I should like to direct a question to the minister regarding the letter of the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission. The Minister of Finance has had this letter since last Thursday. Has it been referred to the law officers of the Crown? Have the law officers of the Crown satisfied themselves that the provisions of the bill now before the House do not infringe upon or violate the spirit or the letter of the Canadian Human Rights Act?

Miss Bégin: I have the pleasure to assure the House that I have received from the Minister of Justice the assurance that this bill does not infringe upon the Canadian Human Rights Act. Of course, it has been tested as per tradition. It has been certified that it does not contravene the Bill of Rights.

Mr. McGrath: I will defer to my colleague in a moment. The minister has referred to the opinion of her colleague, the Minister of Finance.

Miss Bégin: No. I referred to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. McGrath: Before we pass clause 1 of this bill, can the minister table before the committee the reply which will go out to the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission from the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Justice? Perhaps that will satisfy the committee.

Miss Bégin: It is not the practice to table such correspondence. The question can easily be asked of the minister tomorrow during question period.

Miss MacDonald: This is the time.

Miss Bégin: The Minister of Justice is not in the House at this time. If the hon. member wants to question him, he will have to wait until two o'clock tomorrow afternoon. I have received from the Minister of Justice the assurance which I gave the committee a few moments ago.

Miss MacDonald: The letter referred to by the hon. member for St. John's East was written to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of National Health and Welfare is channelling this bill through the House for the Minister of Finance. Since the letter from the Human Rights Commissioner has been read

Family Allowances

into the record and made available to all parties, it is perfectly proper to ask if a response by the Minister of Finance to that letter has been forwarded. If so, will the Minister of National Health and Welfare make it available to us? It concerns very much a point of contention in this debate.

[Translation]

Miss Bégin: Mr. Chairman, I would like to repeat my statement since I do not think it was understood. If in his capacity the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) answers Mr. Fairweather, the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission, the onus will be on him to decide whether or not he wants to table this document. After the press gallery and the opposition parties received a copy of it, the movers of this bill, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) and myself received late Thursday afternoon a letter from Mr. Fairweather indicating as I said very ambiguously, that there was possible discrimination. This was proved by the fact that the opposition parties interpreted very differently the paragraph in which Mr. Fairweather expressed his concern. I am neither Minister of Justice nor Minister of Finance. It is our responsibility—and I am speaking on behalf of us both tonight—to state that we are satisfied and my colleague the Minister of Justice agrees with me on this point that the studying of Bill C-10 does not violate in any way the Human Rights Act.

[English]

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, approximately three days ago I spoke privately to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. I asked him to be prepared at some future time to give us a much more detailed breakdown concerning the expenditure savings and tax cut ramifications involved in this bill. I should like to ask the parliamentary secretary if he can supply some of that information now.

At the time I referred to this, I made reference to the initial speech of the Minister of Finance on October 31, as reported at page 653 of *Hansard*. At that time the minister said that this was a tax cut amounting to some \$810 million a year. Basically he was referring to the \$200 per child tax credit. Will the parliamentary secretary give us the details as to how many people are involved in that tax cut? What year is he referring to specifically?

Mr. Martin: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the simplest way around this would be to table the schedule which I think will be of some assistance to the hon. member for York-Simcoe. With the leave of the House I am prepared to do that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, nothing can be tabled while we are in committee. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary can ask the committee to put it on the record as part of *Hansard*. Tabling is of no use to most of us; it just goes to the table.

Mr. Martin: If that is agreeable, I would be happy to do it in that way.