

Income Tax Act

and television stations and to newspapers and said, "Stanfield is preaching in the wilderness". By using all sorts of sketches attempts were made to try and persuade the population that the leader of the opposition did not know what he was talking about. A few months later, our hon. friends opposite with the minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) leading the way had to recognize that there was ground to lead the campaign in favour of the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if we were right in our opposition to the white paper we are surely right in our opposition to Bill C-259 since this bill can bring nothing but malediction.

Once more, under the leadership of my hon. leader, we asked the government not to deprive ordinary citizens of the exemptions they are entitled to and, for that purpose, we urged that the bill be divided into two parts. But the Liberal members cannot possibly feel the nation's pulse—estranged from the people as they have been for a long time now—and do not want to listen to reason.

A few months ago, my hon. friend the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) maintained that one needed courage to create unemployment. The Liberals keep on creating distress among the people since they refuse to recognize their rights and privileges.

How can one believe that Bil C-259 reflects the people's desires when the Minister of Finance himself told the Canadian people that, whether they like it or not, the bill would become law on January 1, 1972? How can one believe that he was right when he himself introduced, after some time, about 100 amendments to the bill and later on amendments to those amendments, while saying that when this monstrosity becomes effective, it will still need improvements? How can we believe that the Minister of Finance and such back-benchers as the member for Bonaventure, who are doing their utmost to have this legislation passed, are well-disposed towards the population—

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine on a point of order.

Mr. Béchard: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, who claims to know Quebec inside out, should also know hon. members' constituencies. The Bonaventure constituency should properly be called Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, what a point of order! I would like to ask immediately the member for Bonaventure and Gaspé what part of this monstrosity is going to improve the farmers' and the small industrialists' lot, which part of the bill he will support whole heartedly since he is blind and more devoted to his party than to his country? How is this bill bringing some relief to the small employee who will keep on being taxed? How will this bill bring any improvement to the Canadians? The minister and all the Liberals will keep on praising their leader—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see them applauding because only a few years ago they called him a stupid

[Mr. Ricard.]

ass. Are they going to keep on applauding? Mr. Speaker, when a majority government has to use a gag to prevent those who defend the people from speaking, the time has come to worry and to raise one's voice,

• (8:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Baldwin: Question.

Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not intend to become partisan on the issue that is before us.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cafik: We are discussing Bill C-259. When the white paper on tax reform was proposed in this House on November 7, 1969, I decided that the issue of tax reform would probably be the most important single issue on which I would ever have to cast a ballot for or against as a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Alexander: The hon. member is breaking my heart.

Mr. Cafik: I decided to do something positive about this, namely, to set up a riding tax committee of a non-partisan nature to study this matter, so that I could make a decision, not based on partisan considerations but on what I felt was in the best national interests of the people of this country. This tax committee consisted of approximately 20 members, a number of whom were certainly from outside my party, some of whom were from outside my riding and two of whom had worked with the Carter commission when this subject was being studied.

We studied this white paper for almost one year. Following our studies as a committee, I took this problem, along with recommendations that we had tentatively arrived at, to the people of my riding. We called a series of meetings from one end of the riding to the other. My riding is not as big as some; it is roughly 100 miles long and embraces 17 municipalities. I had meetings convened in each area. Some meetings were attended by large groups; others, in the southern area of the riding were not so well attended. None the less, we presented to the people the proposals of the white paper as well as our committee position. As a consequence of the reaction to these proposals presented by the committee, we adjusted our position a little. We did so as a result of the input by the people of the riding who did not belong to the select committee.

On November 10, 1970, our committee met with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) as a group. We presented a report to him in which we made 21 recommendations for basic changes. Some of those recommendations paralleled those which had been made by the standing committee of the House of Commons, although other recommendations were totally different. For instance, our committee was totally opposed to the principle of integration whereas the parliamentary committee was not. We liked the principle in theory but we could see no possible way of implementing it in practice.

Mr. Forrestall: How are you going to vote?

Mr. Cafik: Of the 21 proposals we made, and I will not go into details at the moment, 15 were accepted by the government in whole or in part and six were rejected.