

Financial Administration Act

These remission orders are listed and made available to parliamentarians and the public so that they can be examined. If a parliamentary committee so chooses, it can call witnesses before it to say why a particular remission order was granted. It has wide-ranging authorities in that respect. So there is that element of parliamentary control that exists within the current system.

Also, as with any other Order in Council—and remission orders have to be made by way of Orders in Council—there is an obligation that these be published in *The Canada Gazette*. In this way any subscriber to *The Canada Gazette* can take the current issue and look at what remission orders are in the process of being granted. Sometimes it makes very interesting reading. However, I doubt very much if many people actually read them. If a parliamentarian had reason to question a particular remission order, it would be available to him at the time of publication in *The Canada Gazette* and could be brought up in the House.

I think there is in respect of most remission orders an adequate system of public and parliamentary scrutiny and that we need not necessarily go the full route suggested by the Hon. Member for York East in order that parliamentarians might do their work respecting remission orders.

I was going to go into a whole list of types of remission orders with which I am familiar, in particular the canned baby carrots remission order. Because I have only a minute or so remaining, I will not get into the details about canned baby carrots and the taxation thereon.

● (1730)

On balance, Sir, if we were to adopt the resolution before us we would have a little more public and parliamentary scrutiny, but we would tie ourselves up in a series of knots and loss of time. We would not be able to get these remission orders through in time. They are often badly needed, for example, by the marketer of canned baby carrots, or by some of the examples given to us by the previous speaker.

That, Sir, is my contribution to this great debate.

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate this afternoon on Motion No. 101 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Redway). My feelings are not unlike those of my colleague who just spoke, the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson). I have a lot of sympathy for what my colleague, the Hon. Member for York East, is attempting to do, but I have some difficulty with the practicalities.

Before I launch into a few comments, I would like to indicate the high respect I have for my colleague, the Hon. Member for York East. We know him here in the House as an ardent and earnest Member of the House. In his capacity as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts he has brought to that committee a high degree of inquisitiveness and, as my colleague the Hon. Member for Western Arctic pointed

out, a desire to make sure that the funds spent or the taxes not collected are indeed done in a wise fashion.

Under Motion No. 101 my colleague, the Hon. Member for York East would like to have remission orders of various types, whether they be for taxes, fees, or penalties, brought to the House of Commons. We must acknowledge that due to the work of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts there is a new procedure, as was alluded to by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Western Arctic. The Government now publishes a document every six months. The first one came out recently, and represents the six month period ending March 31, 1988. It documents those cases of remission orders that have been approved by Order in Council in the six months preceding March 31. This is an innovation and it gives Parliament an opportunity to see the reasons why certain funds are being remitted and the circumstances that lead up to that.

For example, in glancing through the report in front of me, it is reported that the Lions Club in Riverside was building homes for handicapped persons. It had to import stoves and ovens that could not be obtained in Canada. They had remitted some \$9,940. This was a reasonable thing to do considering the charitable nature of the work the Lions Club was doing in Riverside.

I was even more interested when I turned to the next page and found an example in my own constituency of Oxford where we have been blessed with the building of a large CAMI plant. It is an automotive plant, the largest of all plants being built in Canada under the combined efforts of an American and foreign manufacturer. In this case it is General Motors and Suzuki.

Much of the work going into that plant involves equipment and machinery being brought from Japan, or outside the country. In order for the plant to be competitive with foreign vehicles which would compete against the plant in Ingersoll, the Government has wisely seen fit to remit a significant amount over a period of three years to allow that company to bring in this equipment which will make it more competitive in the manufacture of automobiles.

I do not have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that a company which will employ somewhere between 2,000 and 2,400 people in my constituency will be a significant addition to our economy. I would think that the amount of money being remitted through this remission order of some \$12 million will be more than recaptured by the sales that this company will produce as a result of manufacturing certain automobiles here in Canada, and also exporting them abroad.

There is another interesting problem in my constituency that relates to remission orders, but more in the area of taxation. It comes as a result of the plight of certain tobacco growers at the present time. The tobacco industry is in a downturn. As a result many tobacco growers have found themselves with an immense debt to banks or other financial institutions, often hundreds of thousands of dollars, and sometimes more than the value of their property.