

Income Tax Act

• (2:30 p.m.)

Still on the subject of taxes, Mr. Speaker, I wonder how much longer the people of Canada are going to accept the present government's policies with respect to language training and the imposition of the French language on aspects of Canadian life far removed from the French fact. Reference has been made on numerous occasions to Brockville and Landsdowne. I live just west of that district but I will pass on to some other aspects. French language aspects of Canadian life seem rather far removed from the French fact. Reports that come to us almost daily convince me that morale in the federal public service has never been lower in the history of the service, and it is largely due to the destruction of the public service merit system in order to accommodate French Canadians, both inside and outside the service.

The Chairman of the Public Service Commission has long ago destroyed his credibility and the objectivity of his office by going along with the government's policy to bring French Canadians into the public service in large numbers, whether or not they are qualified to hold the jobs they are given, and whether or not English Canadians are displaced arbitrarily to accommodate the newcomers. There are cases of people resigning from the public service after more than 20 years service rather than to be shunted aside, and in many cases subjected to abuse by new supervisors who have been parachuted into the service in senior positions. There are cases, and they are increasing daily, where promotion boards are now composed entirely of French Canadians, and where French Canadians are given an advantage when they appear before the boards for promotion.

One might argue that this is against the merit principle, and that it is in fact against the law. Of course, this is not the first time that this government has flouted the law. When an English Canadian is denied a promotion that he or she has earned—I am just using the term English Canadian here for want of a better description, I do not really mean English born, but English speaking—

Mr. Mahoney: Anglophone.

Mr. Alkenbrack: That is a much abused and favourite word of the Liberal party. There is provision for appealing the promotion to the board. This sounds like a valid and logical answer to the problem, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately even the appeal system in the public service has broken down. Resort to it is, in most cases, the best way to ensure that you will be barred forever from promotion. In other words, if you appeal the promotion it is the kiss of death for further promotion. In some cases, people who appeal promotion board decisions have their jobs declared redundant. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics is being converted to a French department, and there is so much unrest, so much dissention and so much animosity being generated in DBS over the French-English issue that I plan to undertake a thorough examination of the situation with some of my colleagues. There are things going on in DBS that would make the infamous situation in the National Museums Branch in the past few months look like child's play.

Many years ago I worked for the Bureau of Statistics on the 1931 census and of course that dates me. We had no

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

such trouble then. Over 3,000 people were in our office for a period starting in the summer of 1930 until the end of 1931. The Dominion statistician was Mr. R. H. Coates, a man who served Canada well and long. I recall that my supervisor was named Lemieux and came from around Montreal. We worked two at a desk and my seatmate was a boy from Lac St. Jean in Quebec. He spoke very little English and I spoke a little high school French but during the time we were employed he taught me French and I taught him English. There was a spirit of harmony in that office and we got a lot of work done. There was no French-English question and no bilingual or unilingual contention either.

I am deeply disturbed about what is being done to our public service and to the Canadian Armed Forces by some of the ministers across the floor, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) in particular. This is tax money we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, taxes collected from every part of this country and from Canadians of every ethnic origin that one can name. It is time we directed some of those funds and some of our efforts to Canada and to Canadians, and forgot about hyphens. I am not a hyphenated Canadian, and I do not accept the superficial and outdated concept of hyphenated Canadians. I do not need a hyphen in my name to preserve or retain my identity. If my identity were so fragile that I had to embrace artificiality or superficiality in order to preserve it, I would stop and take a good look at just what it was that I was trying to preserve. If the present government would take the advice it is feeding the country hourly on the radio stations and start thinking Canadian, then perhaps we would start to get somewhere.

I have one more word for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down. If Bill C-259 is the best he can salvage from the lengthy and costly process the government has followed for the past two years, then I think it is time he looked around for a job that better suits his talents. I would suggest that he try to get a job as advance man for a circus, a small circus. It would not pay as well as his present job, but I am sure that he would find it most satisfying and it would be honest employment. The minister would be able to start out with a backlog of the hoopla and ballyhoo he has employed over the years trying to sell his budgets to this House and to Canadians who are forced to pay for his experiments in economic planning. If the finance minister would step down, Mr. Speaker, we might get lucky and have the present cabinet resign en masse.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Order, please. I regret that I have to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. Is the hon. parliamentary secretary rising on a point of order?

Mr. Mahoney: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Before lunch the hon. member indicated that he would accept a question. I am sure he would not want to renege on that and I am sure the House would give him the opportunity.

Mr. Hees: His time has expired.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member knows that he requires the unanimous consent of the House to ask a question if the time allotted to the hon.