

Taxation

right out of the country is the same amount that 11 million individual taxpayers in Canada paid to the federal government in income taxes in 1978, the last year in which the figures were available from Revenue Canada. In other words the total amount of taxes paid by every taxpayer who earned \$17,000 or less, which, by the way, amounted to 78 per cent of all individuals who filed income tax returns that year, or 11 million taxpayers, went straight out of this country to support the National Energy Program. As well, there were complications within the world market and the government opposite is now learning that it cannot really control world markets. As a result, along with the confusion and falling prices in the world market, we experienced the situation where Canadians were subsidizing imports of foreign oil while 300,000 barrels of oil a day produced by Canadian companies were shut in the ground. Your Honour can be sure that none of those oil companies which had their oil shut in are paying any income tax to help the government balance its budget. Furthermore, they are not creating any jobs for Canadians in further exploration of petroleum resources in Canada or in the production or transportation of petroleum products from Canadian wells.

I suspect we will hear more about national energy in another debate. Let me touch on another Crown corporation which might give an example of the managerial abilities of the government. I am referring to the Canada Post Corporation. When we had the Post Office Act before us, we on this side pleaded with the government to allow the Auditor General to report to Parliament. After all, he is Parliament's servant. He is not a hired gun who reports to someone else. He is employed by the government for the service of Parliament. He reports only to Parliament. He does not report to the shareholders. He does not report to the Public Accounts Committee or to anyone else. The Auditor General of Canada reports to Parliament and, in that way, he is unique. Other corporations may have other auditors who report to the minister, and then it is up to the minister to decide when Parliament should be allowed to look at that auditor's report. That is a change that we could see if we could ever get the government to agree to introduce a bill concerning Crown corporations and amendments to the Auditor General Act. We could obtain special reports from the Auditor General. The House might even have direct reports from other auditors. However, at the moment, in the way it stands, and we cannot get this government to move on this matter, the Auditor General is the only one who can report to Parliament directly.

The office of the Auditor General has had 113 years of experience in auditing the Canada Post Corporation. However, what does the government do? It says it will not name the Auditor General in the legislation as the auditor of the Canada Post Corporation. We do not know why. The government would not tell us why. However, two joint auditors were to be appointed. I do not know whether it was pressure or luck but, in any event, the Auditor General was named as one of those

auditors, and he will be one of the joint auditors for the first two years of the existence of the Canada Post Corporation. It has since been revealed by the Auditor General, before the Public Accounts Committee, that he has received a personal letter from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) indicating that at the end of his two year appointment, his services as auditor of the Canada Post Corporation will no longer be required. It is totally unnecessary to throw out that kind of expertise or even to have joint auditors for something like the Canada Post Corporation. This duplicate effort is a waste of the taxpayers' money. Anyone in the auditing profession will say that joint audits are not efficient. It costs more to have joint auditors than it does to have a single auditor. However, we could clarify that situation if the government would only show some good management and bring in legislation dealing with Crown corporations so that we would know who was in charge. One cannot get an answer from anyone around here concerning Crown corporations. No one knows who is in charge of any particular Crown corporation. Of course, the audits are spread all over the map. We need this kind of legislation and we also need some changes to the Auditor General Act.

All of this simply adds up to the fact that this government is out of touch with what is going on in the country. It is out of touch with the people. I think that is exemplified by a couple of events which I have recently observed in committee. Last week the Minister of Finance indicated that exemptions for individual taxpayers who registered pension plans or retirement savings plans, which exemptions have remained unchanged for five years, had not received his consideration. Deductions for child care expenses, which have been set at \$1,000 per child to a maximum of \$4,000 per working mother, have not changed for five years. However, the Minister of Finance knows very well, as he has been told by working parents and by all members on this side, that costs of child care have dramatically increased during this period, while the exemption remains at \$1,000 per child. One cannot possibly care for a child for \$1,000. It is an unjust situation when working parents are unable to deduct normal business expenses, and child care expenses are normal business expenses.

I see that it is six o'clock and perhaps I will continue my speech on another day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening when the House will consider, under the terms of the Speaker's ruling earlier today, the motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 26.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.