

Income Tax

certain amount of discrimination with the result that one section of society, the householders, would be given a tax advantage while another, those who were renting accommodation, would receive no such benefit. I was, therefore, pleased to see by the terms of the hon. member's motion that there is to be no such discrimination—that the proposal covers both householders and those who are renting. In these circumstances, I am pleased to speak in favour of the motion; it appears that even though the government is attempting to discourage home ownership, to judge from some of the proposals in the white paper on tax reform, here is a parliamentary secretary who believes the time has come to give a break to those who own or rent homes.

• (3:50 p.m.)

I should like to say that, on the one hand, we have a government member attempting to bring relief or some incentive in respect of home ownership, while at the same time, his party is proposing reforms or changes to our tax structure which would hamper the small businessman. It is unquestionable that he has played a great role in respect of home ownership. Further, we say that this white paper, in effect indicates there is a desire on the part of the government to bring homes into a proposed capital gains structure. These two things indicate there is something wrong in respect of the thinking of the government. I am glad to see that my hon. friend has now set the government back on a proper course. Perhaps he might refer the matter to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), and the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing, and they might look upon his motion with some sympathy.

I think it is time we started to realize that the home owner, as was so adequately stated by the parliamentary secretary, has been undergoing tax frustration which leads him to the point where he says, well, what is the sense in owning my home. It is not necessary to refer to the white paper. However, I think this motion would give an incentive to the home owner in the form of some tax relief. What about those on fixed incomes and those on pensions who also need a break? Apparently they are not to be given a break. It would appear to me that if the government were sympathetic to the hon. member's motion, relief would be given. The government might then be in a position to say, this is the just society and we are attempting to bring the legislation into line to show that we

[Mr. Alexander.]

are giving some thought to those people on the bottom of the economic ladder, that we have heart, contrary to what a former secretary of state actually indicated.

I should like to mention another point with regard to the motion. There has been a suggestion that the government cannot move in respect of the municipalities because the municipalities are the creatures of the provinces. It is suggested this creates a constitutional hang-up, which is amazing. Here we have a motion, the effect of which would be to give direct assistance to those affected by urban living. In this motion we are saying that, regardless of the constitution and the fact that the municipalities are creatures of the provinces, we can become involved and therefore can entertain such a motion which would give some assistance. I should like to point out that although it might seem at times that the constitution can be a barrier in terms of direct government intervention, in many instances this is not so. Here is one instance in which it is clear that the federal government can intervene to relieve the frustration of urban living.

I hope, as stated by the parliamentary secretary and the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing, that the Minister of Finance will be sympathetic to what we believe is a very commendable motion in view of the frustrations resulting from increased urbanization. In view of the lack of enthusiasm in respect of the government's proposed changes in taxation, and even if the government is insistent on these changes, I hope we are now at a stage, where some relief can be given those who own and rent homes. Since some members on the government side believe in this proposal I hope we are at the stage where we can say that a home can still be a man's castle and not subjected to undue taxation.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be impossible for anyone who comes from a residential urban area and who represents people on modest incomes, as I and the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) do, not to be entirely sympathetic with this resolution. The resolution calls upon the government to give consideration to granting relief in respect of taxes and rents. I should like to point out, as I believe most hon. members are aware, that no group in our population is more frustrated or feels more unhappy than that group of people on small fixed incomes whose home ownership is being threatened by the ever-rising burden of