

Income Tax Act

the government, to be paid back at a slack time at the convenience of the government. This was another tax.

A third tax was imposed. The Canada Pension Plan was introduced. No one objected; yet the actual concept and workings of the Canada Pension Plan really meant that it would be compulsory saving; that is, all those who work must pay into this compulsory savings plan or Canada Pension Plan. It is true that it may benefit people to some degree in their later years. I certainly hope the plan does that. However, in itself, it is a tax on the daily income of the ordinary individual.

Then, another tax was imposed, a tax which is still the subject today of tremendous controversy. I am talking about the 11 per cent tax on building materials and repair components. This was serious because, immediately, it affected the entire construction industry. Costs increased by 10 per cent for a home, 10 per cent for the factory, 10 per cent for a garage and 10 per cent for a school. This was a tremendous increase in costs. We were told the tax would probably be temporary. However, years afterwards, even after we had demonstrated to the government the way in which removal of the tax would immediately create jobs, inspire the economy and give impetus to the construction industry, the government stubbornly refused to remove the tax. That was another tax the government introduced. These "progressive steps" were a charge on everyone and took some portion of the ordinary man's income. Every tax, whether it was of 1 per cent, 3 per cent or 11 per cent, meant less take home pay for the ordinary individual.

In addition, we face an added tax, a terrible, creeping tax that the ordinary citizen objects to but can do little about, the terrible tax of inflation. Week by week and almost day by day, the ordinary householder pays more for everything he uses. The increase may be part of a percentage point, a whole percentage point or two or three percentage points. Today, the cost of living is much higher than it was even three years ago. These are all taxes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, we face this tremendous volume of tax changes known as tax reform. Mr. Speaker, I have contemplated very closely the impact of this measure. It will determine whether or not an individual or family can retain a business and whether or not individuals will find jobs in the immediate future. Once this tax measure passes it will determine whether or not people will be able to afford their own homes or pass on their estates from one generation to another. Realizing the implications of this measure, I am absolutely impatient with members on the government side who, one after another, have said, "Pass this measure, pass this measure". Mr. Speaker, they accuse the opposition of holding up measures in this House.

Mr. Greene: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: They accuse us of filibustering.

Mr. Greene: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: If you look back through the records of this session alone, you will find that whenever two or three members of the opposition rose to speak on a government measure, government members immediately

[Mr. Danforth.]

said, "This is a filibuster; we cannot get our measures through the House because the opposition will not let us."

Mr. Greene: You are irresponsible.

Mr. Danforth: It is the government that is irresponsible. There are 120 members on this side of the House, every one of them representing a very substantial segment of the citizens of this country. Every member has the right to express whatever opinion he wishes on every single measure the government proposes to bring into the House.

Mr. Boulanger: Who is stopping the hon. member?

• (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Danforth: I have no patience with that type of attitude in the Canadian Parliament. There was a time when the members on that side of the House were men who were really interested in the welfare of the Canadian people. Because of the magnitude of these changes, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be necessary for us to deal with them very seriously on a clause by clause basis because the ordinary man on the street does not have time to do this. He is so busy trying to earn a livelihood or find a job that he does not even have time to read the newspapers or follow the day by day deliberations of this august House. It is impossible. He relies on us, his representatives, to bring about the very best tax reform measure for Canadians.

What bothers me is the devious manner in which this government in past months has approached this entire proposition. I have absolutely no confidence in the pronouncements of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) or his parliamentary secretary. I respect them as individuals. I am not castigating them personally, but the manner in which they discharge their duties in this House is very suspect.

I remember sitting in this chamber for most of my Christmas holidays debating a government measure whereby the amount on which the estate tax was to be imposed would be lowered from \$60,000 to \$20,000. This bill was introduced just before Christmas. Your Honour will recall that members opposite asked us to please pass it. We were told that if we wanted to get home for Christmas, all we had to do was pass that measure and we would be home free. What a joyous occasion that would have been if we had gone home for Christmas knowing what countless thousands of Canadian taxpayers would have had to pay. It would have been a mighty poor Christmas for thousands of families if we had yielded to that type of threat. We finally reached a compromise with the government that it be reduced from \$60,000 to \$50,000 instead of the \$20,000 proposed by the government. We did our best. We went home the day before Christmas satisfied that we had acted correctly, promptly and justly on behalf of the Canadian people.

When we returned, the Minister of Finance indicated with glee to this House exactly what had happened. It was true that he had agreed to drop the amount on which the tax would be imposed from \$60,000 to \$50,000, but he did not tell us that under the regulations the tax on amounts over \$50,000, instead of being calculated on the excess over \$50,000, was based on a rate beginning at \$20,000. This might have been considered a clever move by the