

Private Members' Business

However, we do have the ability. We were elected to lead. We were elected to make decisions. If members of Parliament believe that \$64,000 is not enough, that the \$21,000 allowance is not enough or that the housing allowance, which we have on top of all those other items, is not enough, we have the ability to do something about it. I guess my resolution does not address that subject. They continue. All politicians continue to have that ability. Mine is simply that whatever decision Parliament or other legislatures make it becomes taxable. That is what I call tax fairness. That is what I believe is the appropriate thing to do, and that is why this bill is here today.

I am only sorry that ultimately this bill will not be voted on because of the decisions and the process that is involved. But I respect that decision because that is the parliamentary process. I am just sorry it is not being voted on because I do believe it is an appropriate measure that should be taken.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, there are many days in this House when I stand and challenge the government on its initiatives, but I would have to say that today I stand and I salute sincerely the initiative of the member of Parliament for Ontario.

He is addressing in my view one of the most fundamental frustrations that the people of Canada have when dealing with the tax act of Canada. The people of Canada feel that the rules, regulations, exceptions and exceptions to exceptions and all preferences that exist in the current tax act of Canada do nothing more than breed complications and paper burden. Absolutely everyone agrees that the current tax act is unfair.

What I like about the member's initiative is that he is taking members of Parliament, the most distrusted people in all of Canada as members of Parliament, and basically saying: "Let us begin this radical reform of the tax act by starting with ourselves. Let us blow out the preferences that we in this House of Commons and all other politicians in the country receive". As the member said, this is really not going to affect our work in any way, shape or form. In other words, if moneys are needed for legitimate expenses then, as the member said, we can come back to this House and say: "Listen, we need more

help to look after the expense requirements that we have as members of Parliament".

There is absolutely nothing more distasteful to the people of Canada than to think that the legislators of this country are talking about tax reform and fairness in the tax system day in and day out, but end up giving themselves a \$20,000 tax preference year in and year out. The people of Canada will never ever totally trust this system unless we begin reforming ourselves.

As the member knows, I have been promoting or trying to advance the debate in the area of tax reform. I guess it has been almost three years. The whole principle behind the concept of the single tax rate is to blow out all the preferences that exist in this country, not only on the personal side but also on the corporate side. Maybe we could go back to basics on this issue and bring in a new tax act where people can judge clearly whether they are being treated fairly or not. I believe that a system like that will go a long way in bringing a renewed attitude toward productivity and the quality of our work in this country.

• (1830)

I have really nothing further to add to this. I give it my full support. The pity of having a private members' debate like this, late on a Thursday night, is that it should receive more attention. We should give members more notice and we should do more promotion on it. I will be honest with you; I did not hear about this until last night when I was advised by someone from the office of the Minister of Finance that this debate was happening.

It is the kind of thing that Canadians want to see. I regret the fact that it cannot be votable. I do not know why it cannot be votable. You are on the government side. There has got to be some way to get all of this support. Maybe we could make some kind of an amendment to the budget or something, or to the current tax act. Day in and day out the New Democratic Party talks about tax fairness and simplifying the system, so I am sure we would get their support. I know my own leader is constantly talking about tax fairness and tax simplification, so I am sure that if the member who has more and better access to the Minister of Finance were to push this a little harder, we could make this a votable motion and it could be law in this country. It is something that