

Taxation

This process, I suggest, must continue today. The free enterprise system and the social system are interwoven; they support each other. We cannot live in company without some mutually agreed upon adjustment to others. We have enough forces at work in our day-to-day encounter with life just waiting to destroy relationships and conditions which work for the common good of our country.

If there is anything which should make a person despise himself or herself, in my mind at least, it would be to live a little mean existence in a time like this. Sure, we have many of the problems commonly found in western democracies today. We have inflation, unemployment and high interest rates. We are faced with the task of reconciling economic development and environmental protection. We have regional economic disparity and poverty, and we recognize those things. We also have the feeling among the middle class that they are sometimes being imposed upon, and we sometimes have the feeling of alienation between citizen and government. I would not suggest at all that we have handled these and other common problems with consummate wisdom, but we cannot evade the hardships and problems of life which we have to face by drawing into ourselves, by simply saying "me first" and being self-indulgent. This is the time to strive for a more harmonious balance of free enterprise and social programs, encouraged by a democratic and caring government.

It has been said that each generation must re-create its own democracy. This means both the economic free enterprise system and the free social system. The re-creation must be all inclusive. To develop a sound economic system a democratic society must provide the motivation and opportunity for people to help themselves. To develop a sound social system—that same society must provide motivation and programs for people to help others. Only with both can our democracy survive.

In debating this bill, Mr. Speaker, I realize it is only part of an over-all financial challenge facing us today. But we must realize that government must be free to create the social programs society needs and, in many cases, demands. At the same time the private sector must be free to create the material wealth which in part allows society to prosper. Ultimately the government ledger, the balance between revenues and expenditures, will reflect the extent to which this freedom has been granted.

I suggest that we should not be pessimistic, for we are the product of a proud heritage and our record is not one achieved through compulsion. Those who built this nation were architects of freedom who dared to dream big dreams. They drafted laws for the protection of freedom as well as blueprints for new machinery. We must do likewise if we are determined to make of the whole of our nation everything it has the capacity to be.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we represent many prejudices, hopes, wounds, and many mistakes. Perhaps we find ourselves all too often taking for granted a host of things which other nations, at other times, could not take for granted. But I suggest to you, Sir, that if we are careless and wasteful, if we underestimate the complexity of the things we must do, if we are self-confident and self-indulgent, if we try to deceive others with a

double standard which involves half-truths for ourselves and insists on whole truths for them, if we fail to read well the lessons of history—and I refer to the days of the depression—concerning the geography of our country and the total spirit of Canadians, we can and will spoil probably the greatest opportunity which God has given to any people.

The fundamental change we have to make, Mr. Speaker, is in ourselves, our attitudes as Canadians, and we have to make that change in support of a government which, by its legislation, by asking for the borrowing authority in this particular bill, is a government which shows it does care because it has that mix of free enterprise entrepreneurial spirit, along with the philosophy of looking after those who really need help. Tell me what other country in the world today has the social programs we have for the benefit of its people? The problems to which I alluded earlier are great, no question about it, but they would be even greater if Liberal governments of the past had not put in place the social benefits which many people are using now to sustain them in their daily life and occupation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Burghardt: Mr. Speaker, in a country like ours today there is a big market for people who not only tell it like it is, but who try to show how it ought to be. That is not always an easy road to follow; there are many potholes which one sometimes finds oneself in. But if we have the spirit, determination and will, then we can and will survive. Therefore, as we consider this bill to establish additional borrowing authority, I suggest we must reflect upon the role of the creators and distributors of wealth, and we must attempt to secure a harmonious balance between the two.

• (1540)

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-93, to amend the statute law relating to certain taxes and to provide other authority for the raising of funds. Basically, this is a bill to gouge more revenue out of Canadian taxpayers so the government can pay off its incompetence in the economy.

The last speaker, the hon. member for London West (Mr. Burghardt), must have been speaking about some other government than the one in power in Canada at the moment. If he thinks his government is compassionate and if he has compassion, I would like him to come to my riding and talk to some of the people who have been writing to me and lobbying the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) to make changes in the budget. They have also been seeking help to find jobs in this country. I found no solace in the comments of the Minister of Finance in question period both yesterday and today. He was asked what new economic plans this government was going to implement as a result of the cancellation of major megaprojects which would have provided jobs for Canadians. These jobs are no longer in place because of economic conditions in the world, high interest rate policies and the government's National Energy Program, which has come under a great deal of criticism over the last year.