

Income Tax Act

use in particular. If we do not address these kinds of questions, we will never address the problem of land use as it should be addressed.

Members of the Progressive Conservative Party have risen and waxed self-righteous about land use. They do not really care about land use. They care about money use. To hear any Progressive Conservative get up and talk about land use and responsibility for the land is just so much hypocrisy. What they really care about is money. When the day comes that they are willing to put their concern about land above and beyond the concern for profit, then we will be able to take them seriously when it comes to land use.

● (1730)

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I must begin by expressing my disappointment at the extreme divergence from the topic which the Hon. Member who just spoke indulged in.

Mr. Blaikie: It is not a divergence at all; it is to the point.

Mr. Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, Section 31 and Brazil have nothing whatsoever in common. Section 31 is making it exceedingly difficult, impossible in many cases, for young farmers who are attempting to acquire small holdings and make them productive. I know some of those young farmers. If they succeed they will become very productive farmers in the future, but at the moment they cannot support themselves by their agricultural earnings alone. As a result, they are compelled to seek employment off the land. Very often both the farmer and his wife are compelled to seek employment off the land.

These young people are working exceedingly hard. It is not unusual for them to have a regular job which requires them to put in 40 hours and then have to work another 40 and 50 hours on the farm. I think specifically of a member of my own family who drives from Regina to his holding in eastern Saskatchewan. That young man is very anxious to become a full-time farmer, and he will as soon as economic conditions permit. In the meantime he faces a handicap which, not solely but in part, is due to the policies of this Government. He is faced first of all with a shortage of capital. He is also faced with high interest rates which have unfortunately been increasing. He is faced with a decline in the revenue he receives for his product.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the price of grain has dropped some 6 per cent this year. This young man is receiving the same price for his produce as was received in 1971 and 1972, but his costs of production are now 250 per cent greater than they were. He is trying to make ends meet but, naturally, he is incurring losses. Unfortunately, Section 31 denies him the opportunity to apply all of those losses against his general income. The result is that Section 31 is making it even more difficult for him to become a full-time farmer.

The young man of whom I speak, and there are many others like him, is not and will never be in the class of a so-called hobby farmer. We on this side of the House do not carry any particular torch for hobby farmers. There are ample provisions

within the Income Tax Act, so I am informed, to govern so-called hobby farmers without reference to Section 31. Our concerns are for those young and struggling Canadians who seek to become self-supporting and productive farmers, those who will become the next generation. They are the unfortunate ones who are not in a position to inherit farm land and equipment from others. They are simply trying to do what our forefathers did two and three generations ago. It was easy at one time for a young man without capital, by virtue of his labour, to go out and become over a period of time a self-supporting farmer. But land value at it is today, and with the cost of operation being what it is today, it is impossible for a man to become a full-time farmer unless he has, first of all, an immense amount of capital available to him. Those who do not have those assets must, of necessity, take employment and try to farm at the same time.

Section 31 works to the detriment of such young people. If it is permitted to continue to function in the way it is now, we will make it virtually impossible for such young people to become full-time productive farmers. If we do that, the economy of Canada will be the loser. We who play the role of Government will also be the loser because we will lose the revenue these young people will eventually bring to us. I commend the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) for bringing this issue to the attention of the House. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is being debated for a second time. We had ample opportunity the first time to discuss the merits of the legislation. That is why I very much support the Hon. Member and encourage Members opposite to permit the Bill to be brought to a vote.

We have an opportunity to indicate where we stand on this legislation. We have an opportunity to express our disapproval of Section 31 which is strangling young Canadians. This is a particularly onerous condition because of the high unemployment which exists across the land. The people of whom I speak already have a job. However, they do not wish to remain in that job, they wish to be farmers. If we permit them to vacate their salaried positions and become full-time farmers, we will free up another position for those 1.5 million unemployed Canadians. In doing this, are we not only helping farmers and the agricultural economy as a whole, but we are helping the unemployed of Canada. Therefore, I say to the Members opposite that they have an opportunity to take a bold step forward. They have had a chance to speak; if they will just permit this Bill to be brought to a vote, then we can do something to further the condition of the young farmer, an opportunity which I think we should take.

Mr. Denis Ethier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I find it very strange that the Hon. Member who just spoke talks of the fear we might talk out this Bill. What they have been doing up until five o'clock was trying to talk out the Bill we have before the House. I find it even more amusing to see how the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) wanted to rush his Bill through without even giving us a chance to take part in the debate. I find it amusing because on so many occasions the same