

Income Tax Act

know that many will be basing their remarks on the amendments that have been put forward by the minister—have not had an opportunity of seeing those amendments. It is my suggestion that because of the complexity of the amendments, together with the complexity of a 700-page bill—and when the amendments are printed it will take two or three hours to fold them into the text of the bill—the government and members of the House would accomplish much more if the minister agreed that we adjourn further discussion at this stage until, say, Monday. This would give everyone concerned a proper opportunity of studying the effect of these amendments.

In the interval, after looking at the order paper, I suggest there is considerable legislation of a high priority which the government on a number of occasions has indicated that it wishes to have passed. We could profitably spend the balance of the week on those items. In this connection I am thinking of the item relating to the committee on statutory instruments, and Bill S-9, the Copyright Act. Without even looking at the order paper, I know there are many other items with which the House could occupy itself. I think the minister and all hon. members wish to have a tolerably intelligent discussion on the tax bill, and unless we know what these amendments are it would be impossible to carry on.

There is another point I would like to raise, Mr. Speaker. We want the assurance of the minister at this time that all of his amendments are in conformity with the resolution as amended by the curative motion passed by the House the other day—in other words, this would be appendix A as modified by the amendments contained in the errata sheet to Bill C-259—that any of the amendments now made do not go beyond the terms of the motion and of Bill C-259. As a classic example, if we are now proposing to change the level of exemptions for dependent children, I think we would have to have special procedures.

The minister will have to give that undertaking so that appropriate procedures will be followed. It might be necessary to introduce a new bill to cover this type of amendment. We need an assurance, with respect to any amendment of substance, that it falls within those terms. We do not want to go through the procedure of another curative motion.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the question of House business, this is a matter for negotiation between House leaders and is not for me to decide. I think that hon. members opposite in the past 12 days of debate on the bill have indicated that they have a good deal to say, even without having seen the amendments, which are mainly of a technical nature.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Except on co-ops.

Mr. Benson: With respect to ruling upon the appropriateness of amendments, it is not my duty to do this but, rather, the duty of the Chair as I present the amendments one by one. I am not putting myself in the position of the Speaker. It is the Speaker's duty to decide whether an amendment falls within the context of the resolution, and I respectfully leave this question to him.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I apprehend what the minister has said. I understand his feeling about this matter,

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

but we must look at it from the viewpoint of the members—and I like to think I speak for the members in this House, including those on the other side.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw any intention I had to speak for members on the other side. First we had appendix A, then we had the bill and now we have a large list of amendments being filed. The minister indicated, when he opened his remarks on clause 1, that other amendments were being considered. We look away into the horizon and we see amendment after amendment after amendment coming forward.

Mr. Benson: Have you got any?

Mr. Baldwin: We have lots of amendments. Our approach to the bill is based on what we know of it. It is a difficult enough bill for any ordinary Member of Parliament to consider, to say nothing of the poor, harassed taxpayer. Our approach to this matter must be conditioned by the final version of the bill. Some of us have struggled, sweated and slaved to try to familiarize ourselves, to at least a limited extent within our competence, with what the bill means. Now we are told it is going to be changed. The minister says they are technical changes. From my experience with the minister's department, technical changes may be exceedingly important changes.

Of course, the minister can force us to go ahead with the bill; the government calls the shot on House business. But the speeches that some of us would like to make on clause 1 will to an extent be conditioned by what appears in the small print of these amendments. I say that as kindly as I can to the minister. I realize his problem.

When we get to the end of this study the bill may be hardly recognizable when compared with its original form. But apart from that, there are a number of items on the order paper crying aloud for attention. Surely the minister would not concede too much in agreeing to a limited amount of time to study the amendments. We will work this out between the House leaders, I hope, and decide how long we should take to familiarize ourselves with the amendments and at the same time proceed with other legislative items which the government must have considered important otherwise it would not have placed them on the order paper.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the order of business has been called for today. We will proceed with the order of business. I know how able the honorable member is in dealing with the government House leader, and I assume he would immediately rise from his place and meet with the House leader if he felt so strongly about proceeding with other items.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, why should I do that when the minister says we will proceed with the business as outlined?

Mr. Benson: I said, for today.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I must protest most vehemently to the minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!