

Taxation Reform

to make the changes in the spring of next year, during his budget, applicable to the taxation year January 1, 1970 so that the taxpayers who are going to be helped by some little improvements could have benefited in the year 1970. Even if the minister needed some months for study and discussion, he would still have some five or six months between now and the spring of next year. He could have introduced his budget and made these amendments in that budget applicable to the taxation year 1970. Why did he postpone them until 1971?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition said he is not a suspicious person. I must admit that in this case I am suspicious. I had a look at the calendar and I found this result. You produce a white paper in the fall of 1969 and you boast about it until 1971. You introduce these proposals in the budget of 1971, applicable to the tax year 1971. The returns for the tax year 1971 will not be made out until April, 1972, and two months later you have an election.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lewis: That is the timetable of this white paper.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. minister is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Benson: On the point of order, I should like to ask a question. If the hon. member and the hon. Leader of the Opposition think the white paper is so damn awful, why do they turn around and say it might be an election document?

Mr. Lewis: Don't let the minister be so obvious and so disingenuous. He has been given a great deal of time on radio and television, and no doubt will be given a great deal more. I am not saying that enviously because the more often he appears the better it is for those who oppose him. He will have a great deal of time to boast about these 750,000 who will no longer be on the tax roll and a great deal of time to boast about the \$150 and the allowances for working mothers, but he is leaving it until the election year before making them effective. I think this is pretty shoddy politics, Mr. Speaker. I think to deal with a question such as the reform of the tax

system on that kind of carefully calculated timetable is to do an injustice to the people of Canada and to the country.

Even if the minister could not bring his proposals into being earlier, certainly the relief to the poorest in this country, the 750,000 people who have been unfairly and unjustly on the tax roll for years, should come next year and not the year after. That relief should come now.

On November 8, 1962, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) was in opposition, he made quite a speech about taxation in this country. This was not my leader speaking or the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. Saltsman), who has often spoken on this matter, or myself, and I have sometimes spoken, but this was Mr. Benson, the same man only now a little corrupted by the power he holds. This is the same man and this is what he said, as recorded at page 1464 of *Hansard* for that year:

The oil and gas industry as such will contribute very little to the income tax revenue of the federal government even though its gross revenue exceeds \$500 million.

Today, that gross revenue is probably much more than that. He went on to say:

I can think of no other industry in Canada in this favourable position.

Then, he went on to say that what we need for this industry are other things rather than tax concessions. He said, as recorded at page 1464 of *Hansard*:

It has been claimed that this industry needs further encouragement to find reserves.

This was in 1962 when reserves in Canada were much smaller than they are now. He continued:

According to figures produced by the Canadian petroleum association at the end of 1961 reserves on hand in Canada amounted to 18.9 year's supply.

Today, these reserves are much higher than that. Later on, he went on to say:

What we need is more and faster growing markets for petroleum products.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) should listen to his colleague in pre-incarnation. He said:

If we had these we would not need tax concessions to stimulate the search for oil.

All I say is, amen. What was true in 1962 is doubly true in 1969. The minister is merely showing disregard for fairness and equity in this way by continuing the present gas and oil concessions until 1974 and then making