

Government Orders

handle it in a more global sense than just with what is presented within this bill. I encourage the government very strongly not to stop at Bill C-51, but to move forward and bring these amendments to the House as early as possible so that we can deal with the global sense of bankruptcy.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, if I could make up for my oversight at report stage in this more formal setting, I wish you all the success and congratulate you very warmly on behalf of my party and myself on your selection as Deputy Speaker. I think it is a very wise and much-deserved appointment.

I would like to turn to the subject matter of this legislation we supported at second reading because we saw it as important and useful. It would see to it that money deducted from working people was forwarded to the government, as it should be, to cover unemployment insurance, Canada Pension Plan and income tax. It seemed a very clear, straightforward and sensible principle.

We said at report stage that there is within the details of this bill a contradiction of democratic process and a contradiction of the rule of law. It is not possible for our party to support this legislation as it finally stands in front of this House.

We support its principles, but its detailed implementation has within it such a glaring error that we can simply not accept it. That glaring error is to take this sensible legislation which was brought to the House of Commons on November 6, 1989, and to say that despite the fact that it was brought before us in late 1989, we are going to make it apply from December 1987.

I see various Conservatives who are lawyers. As lawyers, I wonder what they think of the application after the fact, the backward application of laws. I wonder what the Minister for International Trade would think if the United States were to pass a law which said that their countervail laws in the future were to take a certain form which would be detrimental to Canada and was were going to apply those laws backward for two years. With the principles of this government in standing up for us against the United States, it is possible that the Minister of International Trade might support such legislation. I hope that he and his government will see that such an

attempt to rewrite the legal regime which affects us as a country retroactively is simply not acceptable. Yet, that is precisely what is happening with this legislation.

• (1710)

I guess it is now the junior Minister of Employment, is it? I wonder how the former junior Minister of Transport, I think that is right, as she sits and thinks about this question and the legislation in front of us, would react if the Government of Ontario were to put into effect legislation which attempted to apply to trucking companies in the province of Ontario not just a tax on tires from the day the tax is brought in but a tax on tires back two years previously. I am sure she would be outraged.

[Translation]

I look at the Quebec members who are in the House. I look at them and I wonder what can be said about Quebec members who do not listen to the Desjardins movement, who did not listen to the caisses populaires—

Mr. Larrivée: How about the Royal Bank?

Mr. Ricard: We listen. But we are in favour of justice.

Mr. Langdon: —who did not listen to the Quebec caisses populaires management when they said to the legislative committee that it would not be possible to have such retroactive action.

Mr. Ricard: I agree with that.

Mr. Langdon: The hon. member says he agrees with that. For his sake I hope he is prepared to vote against the bill under consideration.

[English]

I must say that I was especially interested to hear the Liberal spokesperson who just put the Liberal position, which I took to be a position which supported this legislation. I guess I was especially amazed to hear the Liberal position because in committee, the Liberal position was against this bill.

I know that the Liberal party has many times attempted to straddle the fence, but this is the first time that I can remember where it has taken one position in committee, voting against this bill, and taken the contrary position in the House on third reading, suggesting that it was in favour of the bill. This takes inconsistency. It takes contradictory positions to a new depth. I must