

Income Tax Act

and when it stops receiving more money, then it should level the tax off.

I am putting this forward, as I have done in the House many times before, as a classic example of the utilization of quantitative analysis through which the government may find out what is happening, rather than relying on this theory which we learned in school 40 years ago.

This bill has a number of clauses which should be praised. I am glad that at long last the remuneration for spouses has been included in the Income Tax Act. This has been requested by small business people and farmers all the years that I have been in public life. Credit should go to the budget of the hon. member for St. John's West of one and a half years ago who first introduced that provision which has been retained by this government. Even though I can accuse the minister, I believe wisely and correctly, of being forced to look stupid as the result of some of the statements he made in that budget speech when he should have been zigging rather than zagging on taxation, on that provision, I want to make it very clear that every husband is damned grateful.

The next item is small but crucial, and that is that the SIN number, the social insurance number, has now been mentioned in the Income Tax Act. No longer will instructions be given to banks, credit unions or trust companies to take out 25 per cent of the interest which holders of small denomination bonds with cash coupons must pay to the income tax department and which can only be refunded to them if they file an income tax form.

Most of the holders of \$100 or \$200 bonds are children, housewives or older people with a little bit of pin money who like to go down to their financial institution once or twice a year to obtain their \$2 or \$3 in interest. Yet, the people in National Revenue and the Department of Finance who would skin a louse for its tallow stuck in the provision that 25 per cent of their bond dividends must be paid by these old people and these children, knowing very well that they would never have to pay income tax. The government stole this money from these people, but at long last it has corrected the situation, and it should receive credit.

I might say, in all fairness, that there was no such provision in the Crosbie budget. I am appreciative of the fact that it is in this budget. I cannot find in this Income Tax Act a provision which applies to common-law spouses and which was in the Crosbie budget. Does the minister not know that there are a large number of common-law relationships in Canada? The number of these relationships cannot be measured at 1 per cent or 2 per cent. I do not know the correct percentage, but I do know that when I walk through any part of Canada, I am told of the unfairness which a man, who is probably paying alimony to his previous wife and who now has a common-law wife, must face because he cannot claim her as a tax deduction, even though she is carrying out all the functions of a wife. That provision was in the Crosbie budget. I have been through this bill twice. Maybe I have poor eyesight, but I have looked through this 200-page bill, and I cannot find it. Why discriminate against a person who is not divorced from his wife by not

allowing him to use this common-law wife as a deduction? Is this part of the reluctance on the part of the government to treat women as equals, or is it something more realistic, namely, that the income tax people in the Department of National Revenue do not give a hoot about justice or equity? They are looking for every last penny they can find. They think they have a good, valid and moral reason because the couple living common-law are living in sin. I question whether the income tax people should concern themselves with this type of delicate question. I use that as an example of the other side of the story.

● (2150)

I have a list of 13 subjects I would like to raise with the minister. In some cases I hope that even in this last minute he will do something. Some of these are very important, but I will have to let them go.

Finally, there is something I have been raising in this House for seven years. Under the definition in the Income Tax Act and the Family Allowances Act, an orphan is not defined as being a child if that orphan is under 16 years of age. The minister in charge of social welfare agreed that is a discrimination against orphans. In 1978 the minister promised in the House to do everything possible to change it.

Who is holding it up? It must be the Department of Finance, Treasury Board or National Revenue. This bill does include a definition of a child, if they are eligible for family allowance from January to December. Why not include the word "orphan" in the definition of the word child. If a person is an orphan, he has lost both his father and mother. Why should he be discriminated against under the family allowances legislation and the child credit legislation just because he has no parents? The minister has admitted this discrimination. The previous minister of social welfare knew about it. Everyone knows about it, but nothing happens.

If this government has any principles of fairness and ethics, it will look at this question of orphans and consider including them in the definition of a child. It will get rid of these definitions and regulations which do an injustice to the orphans of this country.

Mr. Domm: Mr. Chairman, in the few minutes remaining in tonight's session, I wish to deal with my concerns regarding Bill C-54 as they pertain to the business community in Canada. During this session of Parliament, members of the opposition have probably spent more time on what appears to be a disregard for the stresses and strains placed on the business community in Canada through measures like Bill C-54 than on any other subject. Members of the opposition like to feel that members of the government have had some business experience. We would also like to feel that their business experience would be reflected in the legislation they bring before this House.

We went through an election campaign in 1979 and another in 1980 in which members opposite pledged themselves to