

Income Tax Act

in Lotbinière and throughout Canada may have at least a semblance of subsistence and no longer depend on governments.

That goes with governments, Mr. Chairman. That is what the Economic Council of Canada say in their Eight Annual Review, which I invite my hon. colleagues to read. They speak of government and decision-making, of political implementation of development of human resources. There can be no further development of human resources, they are being crushed, frustrated, forced to sign application forms, on all fours before civil servants to obtain their hand-outs.

That is not the way to develop human resources. Let us implement the social security program mentioned by the hon. member for Témiscamingue in order to safeguard individual freedom instead of crawling before tipsy officials. In that way, we will begin to set up some sort of just society at least.

Then, let us stop giving with one hand and taking away with the other. If we go to the universities and tell the students "Long live the just society!" they will answer: "Is that the just society when you give us a scholarship with one hand and take it away with the other through taxes? Moreover, we cannot find jobs during the summer." Mr. Chairman, those young people are not all "lousy" and revolutionaries. They want to build Canada. Those young people want to work, as the hon. member for Témiscamingue told the House. Those young people are not heartless; they want to participate.

Mr. Chairman, if we grant single people a basic exemption of \$1,500, while a year at university costs them \$2,500 and if, moreover, they end up on the unemployment market—we cannot talk of the labour market any more in Canada—it is hard for a father to teach them the value of authority, it is hard for any authority, at any level, to say to those young people: "Help your country, get involved, get into the game!" The young man will reply: "Help me first of all to make use of my degrees which are lying on a shelf, then we will talk about politics."

People—those in my constituency as well as those in the constituency of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or any other member—want to participate, but let us quit messing around!

If, on the one hand, the maximum old age pension awarded is \$3,060 a year, it means that the government is conceding that the minimum for subsistence is \$3,000. Why not then grant basic exemptions of \$3,000 for single people and \$5,000 for married couples?

Before resuming my seat, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, who did not listen to a word of what was said, to at least reveal his own thoughts on the bill.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I must unfortunately interrupt the hon. member to remind him that his time has expired.

[*English*]

Mr. Danforth: Mr. Chairman, I interject at this moment merely to ask a question for clarification. I have in mind section 110 (1) (c) (xii). In this regard rulings are made with due and just cause—but we only receive rulings, never an explanation. Subparagraph (xii) provides:

for any device or equipment, not described in any other subpara-

[Mr. Fortin.]

graph of this paragraph, of a prescribed kind, for use by the taxpayer, his spouse or any such dependant as prescribed by such a medical practitioner—

Let me give an example of what I have in mind, for the information of the minister and his parliamentary secretary. I know of a gentleman who has unfortunately been struck with a serious and incurable disease which necessitates his using a wheel-chair to travel from his place of residence to his business. In order to do this it was necessary to instal handrails and a ramp at his home as well as special controls in his automobile.

As outlined in this section, this type of equipment must be prescribed by a medical practitioner. As a matter of fact, the devices were prescribed by this man's doctor who advised him on the manner in which they must be installed and how they should be used. His doctor also helped to obtain the necessary equipment for the automobile. On making application to have the costs of these things deducted from his income, this man found they were disallowed and he asked me to make an appeal on his behalf. I did this, but the ruling was not in his favour.

I know the department looks at these matters very carefully, but I am unable to understand why they disallowed what I considered a very fair and just deduction in accordance with the wording of the act. I am wondering whether an explanation can be given.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, under the existing law the only things that can be deducted are those defined in the act. Under the act as it will be when this bill is passed, I hope very soon, the Minister of National Revenue will have the power to decide on the new things that should be allowed as deductions, such as equipment, and so on. I cannot say whether it will cover such things as ramps, hand-railings and that sort of thing. We are allowing wider discretion to the Minister of National Revenue in order that he can hear cases and make changes rather quickly without having to come to Parliament each year in order to make small changes.

Mr. Danforth: Perhaps I might be permitted to ask the minister another question. The minister has just stated that this is a new provision and is a modification of the act. The minister is familiar with the problem I have outlined, but is it his understanding that under the terms of the new act such a deduction will be allowed, in terms of the bill now before us?

Mr. Benson: I cannot say that. Certain things are prescribed in the act and the Minister of National Revenue is given certain latitude in determining those things which may be additionally prescribed. I should not like to pre-judge decisions which will be made in this regard.

Mr. Haidasz: May I ask a question, Mr. Chairman?

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Unless the hon. member has unanimous consent, the responsibility of the Chair is to indicate that we have now reached ten o'clock and unless otherwise directed by the committee I must report progress.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chairman: If it is agreed that I do not see the clock for a few moments, that is fine, otherwise the committee must abide by the rules of the House.