

Income Tax Act

That was on Monday of this week. We also know from subsequent experience that no new issues were raised in Committee of the Whole and that the committee, quite properly, spent its time discussing issues that had already been exhaustively examined. We know too that today editorial opinion in the country is divided. If one were to reach a judgment it would be that probably editorial opinion is slightly in favour of the action taken by the government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: Finally, it is also clear that the public has not been roused to any state of indignation. In fact, it is my feeling that the public in general supports the action of the government in bringing this debate to a conclusion. As the amount and complexity of legislation increases, we are also conscious that time is not unlimited, that every day spent on the tax bill is a day that cannot be used to clear other legislation on the order paper now awaiting our attention.

In the sessions between 1960 and 1968 Parliament sat an average of 142 days. During the first two sessions of this Parliament we sat an average of 176 days, and this, Mr. Speaker, is the 231st day of this session. Whereas in the previous period Parliament enacted an average of 46 public bills per session, during the first two sessions of this Parliament we enacted 65 bills per session.

It is apparent that the pace of public business requires a different attitude in the House of Commons and that this requires the House to change its procedures in order to cope with the accelerating pace of public business.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: What is crystal clear from these facts is that if Parliament is to meet the requirements of today—

Mr. Stanfield: The government must produce sensible legislation.

Mr. MacEachen:—it must become more willing rather than less willing to accept reasonable organization of its business through time allocation procedures. Political parties in the House must adapt as well to the accelerating pace of public business.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: In his speech last week the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) candidly revealed to the House that his party lost almost two months in commencing its study of Bill C-259. That is regrettable, Mr. Speaker, but the House of Commons cannot be expected to delay reaching decisions in order to accommodate an inert opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: The public expects the government to try to get its legislation through the House. The public not only expects the government to try, the public expects the

[Mr. MacEachen.]

government to succeed. In this connection may I put on the record an apt quotation—

Mr. Nowlan: Is this the minister's valedictory speech?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: It sure has. He has expired.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, we have heard, in the remarks of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) the greatest misapplication, misinterpretation and, frankly, misrepresentation to the House of statistics.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): We have heard false statistics and even falser conclusions. I will not dignify his remarks with further comment because they were not worthy of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Baldwin: Did you get that, buster?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): We have seen today a further demonstration of that spirit of the sun god that in history made a man say, "l'état, c'est moi". This whole philosophy pervades the attitude of hon. members opposite. Of course, few if any of them sat here when Standing Order 33 was used previously. If this government had had the guts and the moral courage it would have said it was going to use closure and have used it; instead, the government uses the term, "allocation of time".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): All we hear from the backbenchers on the other side is just frustration stemming from their inability to participate in this debate—

An hon. Member: You are not speaking for us.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):—their inability to speak coherently and intelligently about the provisions of the bill.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Not one of them has demonstrated that he can do so, at least not from what we have heard so far.

Mr. Stanfield: And the minister stayed out of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

• (2:20 p.m.)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): If the government had used Standing Order 33 it would have been bad enough, as it was on the previous occasion. But a week or ten days ago when Section 75C was used in the House some 200 clauses of the bill had not been considered. Here the President of the Privy Council was totally wrong. He