

Income Tax Act

hurt much of the Canadian economy and further confuse and complicate the lives of millions of Canadian taxpayers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: We made it clear from the start—and I speak now through you, Sir, to the wide open ears of the Minister of Agriculture—that we welcomed parts of the bill such as, for example, the improved exemptions and assistance for the aged. I can take the minister through quite a list of things that we would be prepared to pass very quickly.

Mr. Baldwin: We suggested it first a year ago.

Mr. Hees: We have been pressing and pressing for it.

Mr. Stanfield: What we want is something quite different from the aims of the present government. What we want is to have reform recognize the importance of the spirit of initiative and that this be the main source of economic growth in the country. What we want from tax reform is clear recognition that a prosperous and growing economy is, in the last analysis, the only way to ensure social justice. It will not ensure social justice by itself but it is a necessary foundation for social justice. The greatest social priority in Canada today is jobs. Nobody doubts that, following the statements contained in the report of the Economic Council of Canada. May I say to the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. McBride) that the greatest achievement of the government he supports has been the creation of massive unemployment.

Mr. Ricard: Your Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) even said it took courage to do that.

Mr. Stanfield: According to the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton, the unemployment shown by the statistics is just imaginary, and the only trouble is that there are too many people looking for work.

What we want from tax reform is, among other things, the recognition that some social traditions, one of them being the family farm, should be protected and not destroyed.

Mr. Ricard: We have been telling you that for years.

Mr. Stanfield: What we want from tax reform is something that takes account of the priorities that we shall be setting ourselves as a country in the coming years, including the development of an industrial strategy, which we do not have, which the government does not have, and which the government does not know how to develop. That is what we want from tax reform. The trouble with this government is that someone programmed it back in 1968 in accordance with what someone deemed to be the priorities in 1968. The government has been on the same program ever since, and this has resulted in disaster to the country and in the government being completely unable to respond to the difficulties and the priorities that have faced this country.

Mr. Osler: You said we did not have a program.

Mr. Stanfield: The government had a disastrous program. A minute ago I gave the government credit for

creating massive unemployment. That was part of its program. Because of the importance of tax reform being related to the goals of the country, we remain opposed to a measure that is described as a tax reform bill, the only result of which is to complicate things. We will continue to ask the government to split the bill, and we ask members of all parties to support this request. We have asked, and continue to ask, that the bill be amended so as to take into consideration the problems of the farmers in this country. Therefore I ask members of all parties to support the amendment of the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert).

• (4:00 p.m.)

Sir, let me simply say in closing that what we are up against is a question of whether we are going to implement a tax policy which is designed to encourage the people of this country to meet the economic priorities of this country or whether, on the other hand, the people who drafted this monstrosity are going to have the personal satisfaction of seeing it rammed through this House with disastrous consequences to this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Fernand-E. Leblanc (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs which worked very hard studying the white paper on fiscal reform and preparing recommendations, I am pleased to participate in the debate and to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) who availed himself of several of the committee's recommendations when drafting Bill C-259. I was proud to be on that committee, although its members had to sacrifice a whole summer for the benefit of all Canadians.

Friday, when I was in the House, we heard the remarks of representatives of the three opposition parties, namely the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) and the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau).

The speech of the hon. member for Shefford was, in my opinion—I regret that he is not here—vacuous and insipid.

In case I might have misunderstood his speech, I read it again this morning, but unfortunately it leaves no room for doubt. Allow me to explain.

The speech was in two parts. In the first part, the hon. member for Shefford gave us the same old story, and in some cases misinterpreted the bill before us. In the second part, he quoted the editorial of the November 1971 issue of the journal of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants entitled "On the brink of fiscal disaster". And I noticed on page 10,372 of *Hansard* that the hon. member for Shefford attacked me personally—I quote:

I would rather trust the Chartered Accountants Association than a single accountant who has to follow the steam-roller.

Now, if by "single accountant" the hon. member for Shefford means an accountant who is a member of an association, I have no objection to his saying so. However, if he wants to imply that I lack ability, I will reply to him, a weak minded, that he lacks the good sense to be able to determine if a chartered accountant is competent or not.