

Private Members' Business

They have to anticipate. For most people in retirement if they underestimate the payments or if they are late in making their payments, they are penalized. They do not understand that.

In a case—I do not want to read the lady's name because I think it would be revealing personal information—that happened on October 11 of this year, just a week ago or so, a lady whose income bracket was below \$20,000 was penalized because she failed to make the quarterly income tax payments on time. Now Revenue Canada is saying: "Not only are we going to penalize you but we are taking the moneys that you owe us from the instalments you are making now".

In other words she is trying to put in place a system of paying whatever she owes. However, they are taxing not only her past failure to meet the required timeframes and deducting that from her actual payments which are in keeping with what she has been told is adequate. It makes it difficult.

Senior people sometimes think—I believe that they are right—that the system is not operating in a way that is just for them. We should possibly look at the advisability, because that is what the motion calls for, of changing the collection of income tax as it affects citizens whose income is not taxed at source.

I would possibly be one of those who would propose or suggest during study in committee that we should put a ceiling on the taxable income so that the rich do not get any benefit. I do not see any reason why those who have high earnings should be favoured by this measure.

I do believe sincerely that in the lower brackets, the lower two quintiles, that we should possibly be considerate of the situation and allow these senior citizens to make one payment once a year at income tax time on the income earned during the year.

The debate has been very interesting. I have read most of it and have followed it attentively. I know most members are in favour of this position and I want to congratulate the member for Winnipeg—St. James for bringing this to the House.

I think it is a simple measure of justice, a simple measure of equity, and a simple measure of fairness for our senior citizens that would help them to avoid having to make decisions that would possibly jeopardize their financial situation.

I believe there is a disposition before this House today which is in keeping with our Canadian way of life. These citizens have earned their keep, they have proven to us Canadians that they are indeed, in my view anyway, not looking for special consideration but looking for fairness. In view of the importance of this matter I would like to move a motion at this time. I am seeking unanimous consent to do this and I would like to put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that you seek unanimous consent for the following motion:

That Motion No. 484 in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James be withdrawn and the subject matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance for study.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is no unanimous consent. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, just before I start I wonder if you would be able to give me an indication of how much time we have just on a point of order. Is it four minutes? How much time do we have available?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are only three minutes left in debate.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Speaker, I guess I probably used up two minutes finding out I had three minutes left.

In any case, very briefly, we in the New Democratic Party want to register our support for the motion presented by the member for Winnipeg. I think it is an important one given the contribution that seniors have to Canada, the extra effort they always make in their communities. Certainly I think it is an important measure on the part of the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada to ensure that in the case of taxation policy every effort is made to make their lives as easy as possible.

This motion presented by the member would change the current requirements that the collection of income tax is done on a quarterly basis. As I say, it is an