

Income Tax Act

ment because they take pride in acquiring and developing a set of tools of their own.

I am surprised that a member of the Conservative party, which party historically has adopted the concepts of private enterprise, has missed one of the basic philosophies in our Canadian tax system, namely, the fact that income from employment in our country is treated differently from income from business. I imagine the reason is the fact that income from business is the type of income that allows one, if he is an employer, to create his own job and the jobs of his employees, and therefore having done so he is given a consideration and treatment under the Income Tax Act that is particularly favourable because he performs a special role of creating jobs. Now all of a sudden we have members of the Conservative party taking an approach which seems either to disregard this basic principle or forget the fact because of personal, local, or regional considerations.

It may be there is a large number of mechanics in Saskatchewan since that region seems to be particularly interested in this type of exemption. Let me say that at least in theory the assumption has been made that an employer will pay his employer-employee expenses, which include the tools, and in a case where an employer does not pay his employee's expenses other expenses are considered to be unnecessary. This, of course, we all know is not the case in respect of tradesmen, including mechanics. We know traditionally that tradesmen for reasons of pride, practicality, and reasons related to the fact that they have a certain preference or choice in the selection of tools, develop their tools and equipment on their own at their own expense. Therefore I think the question is very legitimate. However, let us for a moment think this through.

What would be the ultimate result if we were to adopt the resolution put forward today? It would mean that we would have in our society a group of tradesmen who are already commanding a very good income who had been recognized under the act, if it were to become law, as having been granted an additional preference, namely, that of deducting certain expenses that other workers who are employees do not have.

I am very surprised that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who seems to be staring at me with great astonishment, would support this measure which would really make the rich richer in a sense, and the poor poorer. This would be the net result of this kind of measure. Surely the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, because of his fine contribution to debates in this House, would see the merit of another approach I would put forward to you, Mr. Speaker, namely, that instead of this kind of a measure we might support one that would perhaps increase the amount which can be deducted by any worker in this country, regardless of whether he has a trade, whether he is semi-skilled or is unskilled.

It is true that such a measure would not address itself to a specific sector, and therefore would not relieve the workers in the particular industry or trade referred to, but in terms of social benefit it seems to me a measure to increase what is presently being permitted, that is to say, the \$150 per year or 3 per cent of wages, to an amount that would not greatly affect the revenue of the Department of Revenue, first of all would be fair because it would apply to

[Mr. Caccia.]

every employee, whether in the mines, in a body shop, an auto shop, a construction site, a bank, or an office downtown.

I refer to a measure that would provide some form of modest tax relief to everybody in this country who happens to be an employee. This is the basis for my argument. It would not be a measure that would provide an additional income benefit or advantage in society to a group which, for a number of reasons, can already command in our economic system a fairly good or reasonable income.

Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (York South): Mr. Speaker, if I may digress for a few seconds from the topic at hand I should like to remark that just about a year ago when I was a very new member and easily intimidated, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) while a private member's bill was under discussion thundered across to members on this side that people on this side of the House had a tremendous habit of talking out private bills. Then he proceeded to take up quite a lot of the time allotted to the discussion of that bill. I should like to say that now, one year from then, the same thing has happened again.

My intention is not to talk out this bill but rather to endeavour to make a contribution, which I believe is what all members should be encouraged to do. My theme is similar to that of my colleague, the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia).

● (1640)

Why single out the mechanics rather than the carpenters, the dye makers, the tool makers, or even the hairdressers and barbers? How about waitresses? As my colleague, the hon. member for Davenport pointed out, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has done tremendous work inside and outside the House for the lower scale employees. For instance, waitresses, if they are lucky, might earn the minimum wage an hour. Big deal! Who buys their uniforms? If they are lucky enough to work in high class restaurants they might get some tips, but the ones I know do not even get work there.

Mr. Johnston: I give them good tips.

Mrs. Appolloni: I am glad the hon. member across is so generous. I must tell all the waitresses I know to serve him.

The wording of the motion concerns me. As I said, I do not see why mechanics have been singled out, even though they deserve tax deductions as much as anyone else.

I also notice another anomaly in the phrase "cost of tools or other supplies". The wording lends itself to speculation. Here again I ask, what about special clothing, for instance, that is needed in almost every sector of industry and commerce in this country, and who helps to buy it?

I sat on a special board, again last December, where we were discussing the egg situation in Canada and I remember some of the farmers, members of the various boards, told us why they must get so much a week, especially in Quebec. They said they needed it to keep up with the industrial wage in Ontario. I asked them, "Do you have the same expenses as the average worker who lives in a large urban centre, who must pay for his transportation to his