

*Income Tax*

What frightens people is that we have a program set up for social purposes, using it as an identification number, which is going to be suddenly stretched into another area. I was in Montreal the other day attending a conference where we were discussing the new Combines Investigation Act which was introduced in the House just today. A question was asked about the seizure of records by the authorities of the combines investigation branch. We already have wire-tapping legislation. Are we likely to see, in the near future, amendments to the wire-tapping legislation allowing the combines investigation people, aside from seizing our records, to tap our telephones? This is the sort of uncertainty which is brought about by the use of the social insurance number by other departments.

● (1232)

I should like to refer to some other things which happened to this young man whose card was misused. The chap who used his name and identity travelled through the United States committing fraud. He was brought to justice by the state police in Texas. At that time, he revealed to the police the fact that it was not his real name and he was using fraudulent documents. Those documents were taken from him in Texas.

After being released, he returned to Canada. He went to the closest post office and picked up an application form for a replacement card, filled it out, and received a replacement card in the mail. He did that, as well, with the driver's licence and birth certificate. After obtaining these replacements, he started all over once again. He was eventually found in Woodstock, where he had worked at a gasoline station. Actually, I found him in jail because he was charged with a fraudulent act. What was amazing about this case is that nobody on the government side was prepared to do anything about it.

The Minister of National Revenue did not know whether he was responsible, even though the victim was being asked to pay taxes on money he did not earn. The Minister of Justice indicated that it was not his problem. The Solicitor General said that he did not know what he could do about it, but would look into it. I never heard back from him. The young man is a victim of circumstances, because a criminal record will follow him which does not belong to him. We attempted to have that record cancelled. The RCMP argued about this—

**An hon. Member:** Don't attack the RCMP.

**Mr. Kempling:** The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs brought a fingerprint card to my office and asked if I could arrange to have my constituent fingerprinted.

**An hon. Member:** A do-it-yourself program.

**Mr. Kempling:** That is right, it was a do-it-yourself program. Can the situation be imagined? The police had a file on an innocent man indicating that he had stolen cards, bounced cheques across Canada and had several fraud charges against him. They had a file on this man which contained the man's name, address, social insurance number and a set of finger-

prints which did not belong to him. The fingerprints belonged to the real culprit, and that is how we sorted it out.

I received more co-operation from the RCMP than I did from any other department I dealt with. I asked the RCMP to look into this matter and to run a comparison between the name, social insurance number and fingerprints. Lo and behold, the force indicated that the fingerprints on the file did not belong to the innocent party. Because the culprit had a criminal record for stealing a car, I was able to follow up his fingerprints and arrive at his name. Finally, it was all sorted out. The difficulty we were faced with was getting this criminal record cancelled. Eventually, we were able to get it wiped out.

Most of our provinces have legislation which allows you to look into the credit records of individuals. What concerned my constituent, after this matter was sorted out, was that private credit reporting agencies would have criminal records and other fraudulent charges shown against his name for offences which he did not commit. As the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain indicated, I hope the minister will take this matter under advice, and at the time we are considering this bill clause I hope he will bring forth an amendment to section 5(2), (3), (4) of the Income Tax Act and not allow an extension of the use of social insurance numbers into other programs.

I should like to quote the following from the privacy and computers report to the Department of Communications:

Two major new income security programs will, if introduced, extend the use of the social insurance number. The Family Income Security Plan (FISP) will, since the cheques will be payable to mothers, require the registration of those mothers wishing to benefit. Proposed old age security legislation will also require the use of a social insurance number. The scale of benefits from both programs will be income-related, and it is expected that stated income will be confirmed by the Department of National Revenue.

It is possible that a *de facto* personal identification number will develop in Canada, either through an ever-widening use of the Social Insurance Number (despite its limitations) or indirectly through credit card and bank account numbers. However, it is important to ensure that a single identifying number should not be adopted in Canada, directly or indirectly, without a full examination and public debate of its merits and consequences.

This is the crux of what we are concerned about. If these changes are made, there will not be enough time to debate them. As the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain indicated yesterday, the change was slipped into a piece of legislation last year. It was disguised in very legalized terms so that the members who were under the hammer of closure did not really have an opportunity to examine it very quickly. It was contained in the legislation and subsequently the bill passed. Fortunately, the whip of our party, the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) said "On division", because he spotted the matter and realized we should not pass it, thus indicating that we supported the government on this particular measure.

If, in fact, it is the intention of the government to bring in a single identifying number for all Canadians, the matter should be brought forth and debated in the House in order for all of us to express our views on it. I am very much upset about the way we seem to be trapped by more and more regulations