

[English]

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, the government quite often uses figures for different types of programs. It talks about solid communities and all the rest of it. The point is, however, Thompson is excluded. The minister, on request from myself and on request from the city council of Thompson, has denied any change in his plans. He has denied Thompson the right to benefit from this program. But I would point out to the minister that Thompson's population has decreased by 5,000 in the last three years. It is not a solid economic community at this time. Inco still operates there, but at a much reduced rate. The government asks what the unemployment figures are for the city of Thompson. What is the average income in Thompson? Yes, salaries are high; unemployment is low. But the government has not looked at what has happened in that community over the last couple of years.

That brings me to my last comment, that what is happening with RDIA, what is happening with this tax incentive program, what is happening with a lot of other programs which are provided by the federal government, is basically ad hocery. We have a program here and a program there. We have a program which will suit some native people and we have another program to suit other groups. We have all sorts of programs. But my constituency office receives requests from many different groups who would like to benefit from regional economic expansion and from industry, trade and commerce. They would like to benefit also from this smorgasbord of government programs.

When I checked with the DREE office, the answer given was: "No, you do not qualify." If you check with the Minister of Employment and Immigration, he says "No, you do not qualify." That is the problem with this government. The Minister of Employment and Immigration, after this tax incentive was announced, ran to the press in northern Manitoba and said, "You are all going to benefit". Yet the minister of DREE points out that only five grants have been given to northern Manitoba in the last 11 years. And the minister who thinks he is somehow responsible for all of Manitoba thinks it is a great boom for the north. He really does not know.

The problem, of course, is that the government does not know what it is doing half of the time. The minister has just told us that he does not know how this program will be received. He does not know whether it will bring a lot of jobs. All we hear is, "We do not know this. We do not know that." I can understand that. I don't think anyone or any party is perfect, whether it be our party, the minister's party, or any other party. But I am concerned about the real lack of planning by the government.

The government does have a smorgasbord approach to development. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion prefers to call each of these smorgasbord programs another arrow in his arsenal. What it means is a hit and miss situation. You might have an arrow for this or that. I can tell you that some of the native people in my constituency have an arrow for you.

Amendment agreed to.

Income Tax Act

Clause 73, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 74 agreed to.

On Clause 75—

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Chairman, I am not absolutely certain this intervention should be on Clause 75. In a bill of 225 pages it is hard for someone who is not a tax lawyer to find his way around it.

My question deals with deducting tax at source for commissioned salesmen, with particular reference to those who may have accepted the blandishments of the government and gone into MURB or oil drilling deferral schemes. If you take a commissioned salesman, for example, we all know his difficulty of the ups and downs of monthly income. If he has his tax deducted at source, he may have one large deduction and then have several dry months. He may find himself in difficulty because he has sent his money into the government. However, the situation gets even worse if he has invested in a MURB or in an oil drilling deferral scheme. In that case he has to pay taxes on a monthly basis. Say he pays \$60,000 in taxes a year, so he pays \$5,000 each month. But his MURB and his deferral plan will bring back a fair proportion of that to him. This is at the behest of the government. The government has asked people to invest in these plans. When the money comes back a year later, it comes without any interest. The government will have it for over a year before it is back in the taxpayer's power for him to get interest on it.

Has the government considered this is really borrowing money from that taxpayer without paying any interest? Would the government consider providing an exemption certificate, or something like that, so that if the individual has invested in a MURB or in an oil drilling deferral plan he can show that evidence and see some of his returns for investing—which the government asked him to do—before some 15 to 18 months have gone by?

[Translation]

Mr. Bussières: Mr. Speaker, I think the problem raised by the hon. member could apply in the case of commissioned salesmen but also in other cases. If we followed up the hon. member's suggestion, it might be prejudicial to other taxpayers when they complete their tax return. They will pay the amount directly since it is deducted at the source. As for an investment in a MURB, for instance, which is a tax-saving device available to Canadian investors, such an investment would not exempt a taxpayer from paying income tax, even though by investing in a MURB, for instance, he might derive a tax benefit later on that would compensate the income tax he will not pay now. However, I believe that the implementation of such a measure would result in a certain element of distortion in relation to other taxpayers.