

interpretation of the statute as it is whether or not the statute was properly drawn and reflected what legislators intended when they passed it. We would have to go back and study the intention of the legislators and what has happened under the section. For example, how many cases have there been, have decisions been going one way or vice versa, what is the position of the tax Department, or how difficult is it for the Department to make this section work when dealing with farmers.

As I said before, we know as farmers' sons how difficult it is for them to make a go at any time. The last few years have been particularly difficult, and no doubt 1984 will also be. We tend to do what the Hon. member for Fraser Valley West has done. With the best of motives, we try to lean over backwards to help farmers. He is particularly dealing with small farmers. I understand and agree with him in that respect, but how can we remove Section 31 and let the consequences fall where they may?

The motion of the Hon. Member would affect the integrity of the Act itself. It would not bring harmony to the farming community. Many farmers are not in favour of the use of farmlands for hobby purposes. They are not in favour of promoting hobby farming in that manner, especially full-time farmers who are profitable and have to pick up the slack. It is not a black and white situation like the Hon. Member would like us to believe. I do not think that will solve the problem and make farmers happy. Certainly small hobby farmers will be happy if we take away Section 31 and they are allowed to use as many expenses as they can dream up on their hobby farm operations against their secondary income. However, the farming community in general will not be happy. Certainly those who have an interest in the integrity of the Income Tax Act and trying to make it work will not be happy.

While the matter is worthy of debate, the simple solution of the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West is inadequate.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a few comments on the motion of the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman). I am interested in it because some people in my riding have expressed concern about the way in which the Income Tax operates in this particular respect. I mentioned this matter in the House before in a statement pursuant to Standing Order 21. I called attention in particular to the unfairness of the way in which retroactivity was applied in some of these cases.

However, I rise to participate in the debate this afternoon more from my concern about what I think is a false impression on the part of the Hon. Member. He would like to give the impression that he is for policies to promote "the retention of productive and potentially productive small holdings in agricultural production" and that he regards it as something valuable. I regard it as something valuable, but I would like to deal with some of the ways in which the Hon. Member and the Party he represents advocate a set of policies which go in the opposite direction to valuing "the retention of productive and potentially productive small holdings".

Income Tax Act

What is the position of the Progressive Conservative Party with regard to the development and growth of agribusiness? What is its position in terms of the way in which more and more farms in western Canada are becoming larger, with small farms disappearing as a result of the ability of the larger ones to buy them out and as a result of the vertical integration in the agricultural sector? I have never heard any Conservatives, nor for that matter Liberals, speak against that kind of economic phenomenon which has every bit as much to do with the disappearance of small productive and potentially productive holdings.

I have never heard Conservatives object to the way in which many people from outside Canada have been able to buy up large tracts of land, driving up the price of land in Canada and making it impossible for small farmers to carry on or for people who want to become small farmers or start new farming operations. When we try to do something about that, the same people who now say they are for small farmers rise in the name of free enterprise and values in the marketplace to say that we cannot stop it because it is free enterprise. Their first priority is not productive and potentially productive small holdings. Their real priority is free enterprise. If small farms stand in the way of that, they can go the way of the dinosaur, as far as the Progressive Conservative Party is concerned. Let us not kind ourselves about that.

I have never heard the Hon. Member nor his Party ask for something to be done about land speculation or about the way in which potentially valuable land is raised in price and often used for the wrong reason because someone got hold of it first and did what they wanted to do. I have never heard Conservatives object to that, because above and beyond the value of land and the responsibility to use it well, they hold the value of free enterprise and the marketplace. Let us not be kidded about that this afternoon by the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West.

The only people we can take seriously when it comes to land use are those who are willing to say that it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the land, a responsibility which goes beyond any attachment we may have to any particular economic system or economic values. That is what the Progressive Conservative Party is not prepared to do. It exalts the kinds of land use which at the moment are destroying the eco-system of this planet. That is the kind of development to which it looks forward for the future of Canada and our planet. That kind of private, uncontrolled, profit-motivated free enterprise development is using up the last remaining stands of the Amazon forest. The other day the Duke of Edinburgh, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, called attention to this particular problem. If we do not do something about the way in which our economic system is using up land—

Mr. Evans: Order.

Mr. Wenman: What does that have to do with the motion?

Mr. Blaikie: I think it is completely relevant because the Hon. Member prefaced his remarks by commenting upon land