

Mortgage Tax Credit

The NDP also argue that this bill applies to a special group. I must agree with that. The group that this bill is designed to help are those 3.8 million people who own homes. I say to them, so what that a certain group has been set out? Every tax law, every tax deduction, every exemption applies to a certain group and not necessarily to everyone else. Certainly our old age security applies to a certain group. Would they turn that back because it is a privileged group?

The hard reality is that the home owners of this country are really the workers. They are the people who live next door to us, who work in the multinational corporations and run the small businesses. It is this group who have been carrying this country, and I have no hesitation at all in backing a bill that will give some status and some protection to this group.

● (1530)

It has been argued by several members opposite that this bill is of no benefit to renters. Obviously they have not been in the real world. In fact, it is a very real incentive for people to get out of their rented premises and buy homes. With the concepts of nationalization and universalism as promoted by the NDP, if they were in government each and every one of us would be renting our homes. We would not have that privilege of owning our home, a privilege for which thousands of our ancestors died.

The members of the NDP are always calling for universalism and nationalization. If they cannot have it their way, they say nationalize it. They would have us all return to the mid-1700s when there were serfs from which our ancestors escaped, many of them losing their lives.

Renters have cheaper costs of living than those who own a home. That is simply because the landlords can deduct the mortgage interest and taxes from their gross income. In actual fact, landlords do not make much money from the rent they receive. They make their money from the capital cost allowance and the capital gains that accrue on the property. The members of the NDP would deny them that. They would deny people the right to buy a home, deduct the interest and have capital gains.

It is also argued by members opposite that this measure has no social value. In actual fact, what could be of a higher social value than encouraging people to own their own homes? Anyone who has lived in a high-rise apartment knows there is no sense there of belonging to the community. However, when you own a home, have neighbours and neighbourhood skating rinks, you feel you belong.

With respect to the cries and wails of the Liberals, it is absolutely apparent and crystal clear that their only regret is that they did not think of this idea first. Their entire position can be dismissed with that simple statement.

The hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood in particular has argued that the government cannot have it both ways. In actual fact, the NDP are in the awful position of not having it both ways. They know that to retain their mere 17 per cent of the supporters they must always be yelling "profit", "rip-off", "multinational"! However, they also want more votes. They

[Mr. Thacker.]

want to form the government some day. In order to do that, they have to cozy up to small business, and that is where they cannot have it both ways. You cannot be yelling "corporate welfare bums", "nationalization", "universalism", and at the same time attack the small business community and home owners who carry this nation. They have to decide which way they are going to have it.

In summary, given the present state of our income tax law, which is incredibly complex and confused and needs a tremendous amount of work in order to rationalize it, given the system as it is at this time, given the present status of our national accounts and given the fact that the Liberal-NDP love affair of the past ten years has practically destroyed this nation, it is time we give a special status and special tax credits to the home owners of this nation. I therefore have no hesitation in backing this bill.

Mr. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I might say that I looked forward to getting into this debate today and in fact was ready to participate last night. It is with a somewhat heavy heart that I rise this afternoon due to today's events which have had a profound effect on all members on this side of the House and undoubtedly accounts for the fact that we do not have too many in their seats this afternoon.

That being said, I wish to refer briefly to some of the comments I have heard from across the chamber and from gentlemen on my left, and then demonstrate, I believe to the satisfaction of everyone present, that this bill is a monstrosity and a disaster.

I was quite impressed with the rhetoric of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Nielsen). I had not had the opportunity of hearing the minister engage in debate in this House at any length. I realized in the course of his remarks that I had met on a number of occasions and admired for many years a brother of the Minister of Public Works, who is a renowned and quite able Canadian actor by the name of Leslie Nielsen. It is quite apparent after watching the minister's performance that his brother Leslie learned his trade at the knee of the master. I found that the remarks, which were both outrageous and filled with hyperbole, were delivered with a straight face, and that is surely a mark of great Thespian ability.

I listened to the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), as I frequently do because we seem to follow each other in these debates. I might say it was one of the first times during the course of this Parliament that I agreed with much of what he had to say in terms of criticizing the bill and describing the obvious housing need, which is an affordability problem and is particularly true in my area of Saint-Henri-Westmount.

I took exception to a number of his remarks, particularly when he seemed to confuse what he alleged to be a Liberal statement of social policy with one that is surely the cornerstone of his own, namely that Liberal social policy, he stated, can be described as "nothing for everybody".