

Income Tax

the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). My leader asked the following question:

I want to get it very clearly from the finance minister. Is he saying that this corporation can respond in this way, a corporation which is making hundreds of millions of dollars profit annually and which has benefited from the labour of the people in that town for many, many decades, and that there is nothing the Government of Canada can do in face of that action by the Corporation?

The minister replied:

The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

That is typical. They cannot do anything. They just sit on their hands and warm their seats. If they had any kind of intestinal fortitude, they would call in the president of INCO and the president of Falconbridge. They would tell them not to lay anybody off. They would sit down with them to find ways and means of reducing their production levels of nickel and copper. They should be told that laying off 3,400 workers is not in the best interest of Canada and Canadians, that they should keep on those workers. Then should follow an economic strategy for that sector of the economy.

We in this country have always socialized the losses in the mining industry, never the profits. It is time the government started thinking in a serious way about national economic planning with an investigation, sector by sector. It could then design a budget that fits the needs of that particular sector and present that to parliament, rather than this sort of ad hocery in a vacuum.

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, in view of the closure motion put forth today by the government, I do not intend to take my full time allotment to participate in this budget debate on Bill C-11. I am certain there are many members, if not on the other side, certainly on this side, who want to put forth suggestions and recommendations. That is their obligation and duty as they represent their constituencies.

Sustained opposition to tax measures should not be muffled by a closure motion. Indeed, when warranted, such opposition is necessary and should be encouraged. Sustained opposition has paid dividends in the past, and it would be no problem to recite many examples of them.

For example, the provision for the deferral of capital gains tax on family farms would not have been brought forward by the government in 1972 or 1973 if it had not been for many members of this side making continuous representations. On that point we are convinced that the deferral which now exists on family farms should be extended to partnerships and to farms that are incorporated.

Second, the deferral of a capital gains tax provision, if reinvested in a similar business, would not be in this Bill C-11 if it had not been for members on this side of the House making representations. Another example is the deferral of certain moneys received from compensation payments if reinvested within a two year period. I am convinced we would not have that measure if it had not been for a number of members on this side making representations to ministers of finance. I am certain that provision could be and should be extended to apply to all forced sales.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

We on this side certainly talked a great deal also about the need to provide incentives to business.

Another example is the removal of legislation to tax earned income payments on death benefits from insurance policies. I recognize that the government has backed off somewhat on that provision. I am certain that over the past number of months members from all sides have received representations from their constituencies. Some may say that many of the representations were from insurance companies and insurance salesmen. I checked my file of correspondence. Although some representations were received from insurance companies and salesmen, many have come to me from a number of policy holders.

This provision has been of great benefit to a large number of people, particularly in the small business community where their only source of backing in a good number of cases is the fact that they hold a fairly good insurance policy and they can rely on that. As far as we are concerned, the government should back off completely from that measure.

● (2152)

Another evidence of the way in which sustained opposition has provided great benefit to the Canadian people is the fact that the gun legislation ended up by being much less offensive than the government had intended.

With regard to the recommendations of the standing committee in connection with the election expenses bill I am sure that if anyone examines the record he must accept the fact that it was members on this side, particularly our leader—

An hon. Member: Which one?

Mr. Wise: An hon. member asks "Which one?" There is no question which one. There has only been one, and with any luck the hon. member who made that remark will be on this side of the Chamber after the next election and the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) will be Prime Minister of Canada. A great deal of credit is due the Leader of the Opposition for getting the government to realize the shortcomings of that piece of legislation.

These are but a few of the gains made by the country as a result of sustained interest in debate and because of a vigilant opposition. Many of these gains are still inadequate. Nevertheless, all have been made possible by continuous representations on the part of members on this side.

I shall not quarrel with the incentives offered by the minister to the business community. It is hoped that sufficient stability can be achieved in our economy and that business will be in a position to take advantage of these measures. So far it has not chosen to do so even though most of the incentives available appeared in the budget of March 31. The future does not look particularly promising with controls still in effect, record government spending, a record government deficit, the 90-cent dollar, and continuing confrontation between government and the business and labour sectors.