

and at what other time should it be included than at the outset? It is when a bill is introduced that we want to be assured that it includes a time limit, not automatically to end the bill or necessarily to end the bill, but to guarantee that action must be taken to review or extend the life of the law.

This has been a long-standing and loudly-professed plank of the Conservative party. Why are they turning their backs on it now when the first major measure of this government is before the House?

May I make one last suggestion, Mr. Chairman. If the government maintains its refusal to include a sunset clause, will it consider changing the year in clause 1 to read 1980 instead of 1979? There is surely something inherently unjust in backdating a tax measure. If the first effective year is next year, then at least the population of this country will be able to take maximum individual advantage of the Tory bill. It will also take some of the pressure off the government, which is forced to use closure in order to rush through this discriminatory, useless and highly undesirable measure that Canadians simply cannot afford.

A sunset clause is an absolute "must", and I plead with the government to reconsider its position.

Mr. Stollery: Mr. Chairman, I do not appreciate the opportunity too much to listen to the remarks of the hon. member behind the curtain, but he may not be here for too long. I do appreciate, however, the opportunity to say a few words at this stage of Bill C-20 and to speak on the amendment put forward by my party. Of course, I speak in support of the sunset clause.

An hour or so ago I was a little taken aback to hear the Prime Minister issue a threat. In the seven or eight years I have been here, I have never seen a prime minister threaten members that if they do not do something right away, he is warning them. I have never been warned before, Mr. Chairman. I think this is something that members should take note of for possible discussion tomorrow. It is a dreadful display of parliamentary practice for the leader of the country to warn members of Parliament—

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I cannot really relate this to the amendment before us to clause 1 of the bill. I would ask the hon. member to please deal with the amendment.

Mr. Stollery: Mr. Chairman, I thought it was in order to remark on that because it relates to the time of the House that is being occupied with the amendment and, in a way, refers to what we are discussing.

I hope the government will accept this kind of amendment which will give them an opportunity to review in one year what is basically a bad law. This is a bad law that is before the committee, Mr. Chairman. This is a law that was intended by this government to make a \$3 billion commitment before we even saw the budget. The opposition has been accused of obstructing Parliament because it thought we should see a budget before we approved a \$3 billion tax expenditure.

Mortgage Tax Credit

The cost of this bill is to be paid for by all taxpayers but the money will go to a selected minority of taxpayers. We have taken the position that that is a gross misspending of the taxpayers' money at a time when Canada, like many countries, has severe economic problems with too much unemployment and too much inflation. Before this expenditure is made, we think the Canadian people should have an opportunity to see what kind of a budget the government is proposing.

● (1600)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stollery: I ask the member across the way please to be quiet and control himself so that I can finish my remarks.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. That is the position of the Chair and I ask the hon. member for Spadina to carry on speaking about the amendment to the bill.

An hon. Member: Get to the point.

Mr. Stollery: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I am trying to stay on the subject matter as closely as possible.

We are proposing an amendment that gives the government—whoever that government may be next year and it may not be this one—an opportunity to review a bad law. We are giving the government of the day next year, and I repeat it may well not be this one—

An hon. Member: You are not too sure.

Mr. Stollery: I just heard a comment from a member who wins every other election. I think we are giving the government an opportunity to re-examine this bad law. It is a sort of hare-brained scheme that has been proposed to try somehow to persuade the people of Canada that the government is living up to its commitment. We want to give the government an opportunity to assess the situation. Hopefully it will take advantage of it. There may be a time—I would not say its members would try to buy their supporters—when memories may have dimmed of wild, extravagant promises, almost all of which are being reneged on, and when they fell they may be able to manage the country and get rid of this very bad law. That is the point of the amendment. It is a good amendment because it gives the government a chance to get rid of a bad law that is being rammed through the House of Commons.

At this stage of the operation, I do not want to review the comments that I made about this bad law approximately two weeks ago. It is bad because it commits a large amount of money to a minority of Canadian taxpayers. It is a bad law because people who have paid for their own homes, for example, older people who often sell their homes because the upkeep is so expensive, and move into apartments, are being fined or penalized. They will have to pay their taxes to a minority of Canadian taxpayers who are living in homes on which there are mortgages.

It is a total disgrace to propose this kind of thing when we have the American experience in evidence only a few miles