

Grants to Municipalities

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): In my opinion the nays have it.

Mr. Nielsen: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): I declare the amendment negated on division.

Motion No. 1 (Mr. Yurko) negated.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-4, an act respecting grants to municipalities, provinces and other bodies exercising functions of local government that levy real property taxes, be amended in clause 2

(a) by striking out line 10 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"the opinion of a provincial assessment authority, would be ap—"

(b) by striking out line 48 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"that, in the opinion of a provincial assessment authority, would"

(c) by striking out line 6 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"opinion of a provincial assessment authority, would be attribut—".

● (2100)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Motion No. 2 (Mr. Yurko) negated.

Mr. Vince Dantzer (Okanagan North) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-4, respecting grants to municipalities, provinces and other bodies exercising functions of local government that levy real property taxes be amended in clause 2 by striking out lines 37 to 46 at page 4 and lines 1 and 2, at page 5.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the point of this amendment was an attempt to bring some reality to the legislation. This act, according to the government's own statements, is an attempt to provide grants in lieu of aid in the same proportion, or placing the government in the same position as an ordinary taxpayer but, of course, not admitting that the government is

liable to a municipality for any tax. The point of all these submissions was to pursue that goal and make the whole thing more rational.

My hon. friend from Edmonton East directed his amendments to that issue and my amendment is directed to it also. It is an amendment to include urban parks as subject to taxation. I understood at the time that the minister was making an undertaking which the government now refuses to honour. I gather he was to set up a committee and that committee would look into the rationality of this act within a year. Since the government is not prepared to back up its minister with respect to this undertaking I certainly do not intend to withdraw my motion. In this sense I speak to it.

I believe it is the due and right of every municipality to be paid proportionately by the federal government. If this is not so, then two things happen. You are asking, say, the municipality of Ottawa, to subsidize the operations of the federal government, or you are asking the city of Vancouver to subsidize the operations of the federal government. I think this is unfair and unjust. It is just not rational. Second, what it does is completely against the Lambert commission report which said that every government department should so handle its accounts that we might know the exact costs of each department. The bill before us and the proposals it contains giving the minister discretion not to pay tax to the municipalities make it very simple to hide the actual cost of government.

For those two reasons I think the bill is irrational and unfair and treats the municipalities of Canada in an unreasonable fashion. Until the act is changed and the government treats the municipalities as if it were a citizen of the municipalities we shall continue to experience problems with the municipalities, as was evidenced by the briefs they submitted.

The minister says, "We cannot afford it; we are following spending restraints." It is very simple. The province of Quebec has passed legislation. It has said, "Fine, we will be subject to the laws of assessment as they exist in the province, but we will phase in the cost because we cannot afford it." That is all we in committee were trying to get the government to recognize. It is a very rational thing. We cannot afford to do it now. Fine. But at least admit the principle and then phase it in. The government with its bureaucratic entanglements was unable to do this, and that was the whole point of these motions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

Mr. Nielsen: On division.