

Income Tax

ment neglects those who are hurt the most by inflation. This is truly a mockery.

● (1630)

The Minister of Finance states that the budget is going to help those hardest hit. What about those involved in our beef industry: who is worrying about them? It seems to me that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) know the correct things to say, but they do very little about implementing what they have said. The headline the other day in the *Edmonton Journal* read, "Whelan promises end to patchwork planning". The beef situation is critical, but the people involved in this industry are the individuals this Minister of Finance does not worry about when considering revenue from income tax. These are some of the individuals who are being hardest hit, yet there is nothing in the budget for them. This budget does nothing to help the people who most need help now.

In closing, I should like to summarize: the policy thrust of this budget was intended to give continued attention to helping those in our society who are most vulnerable to inflation. It refers to the fact that growth in government expenditure should be restrained. The budget contains many other points, and I should like to ask if the goals suggested in these areas have been achieved. I suggest that is not the case.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander).

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I wonder why my friends and colleagues opposite shout "Oh, oh" when I rise to take part in this most important debate. Let me say right off the bat that I am most pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this motion, a motion which is required at this time, under the present circumstances, when taxpayers need a break. That is all the motion suggests. I do not know whether the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has looked at it, read it or even thought about it. Perhaps that is why the group of seven has been established—because the Minister of Finance has been ineffective. I say that with a great deal of respect for the minister. We all like him, but I want to know why that group was formed. I do not know why it was formed, but perhaps we can come to the conclusion that the Minister of Finance is not moving in the right direction or is moving in a direction of which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) does not approve.

An hon. Member: I think they are both going in the wrong direction.

An hon. Member: Speak to the amendment.

Mr. Alexander: I am speaking to the amendment; my hon. friend is too impatient. Here comes the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Basford). We wish him well.

An hon. Member: The big collector.

Mr. Alexander: I have missed his smiling face. He gives me inspiration at times. Sincerely speaking, we do hope

[Mr. Elzinga.]

the Minister of National Revenue is completely recovered, so that he might be effective in his job.

Mr. Basford: I just want to get those refunds out.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: I will get to that blackmail statement in a moment. That statement is just like the statement of blackmail uttered by the Minister of Finance. Apparently this minister has not read the motion either, so for his edification let me read it: it was moved by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence), seconded by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker), and reads:

—this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-49 . . . because it fails to provide for a further 5 per cent reduction in personal income tax in the 1975 and subsequent taxation years despite unprecedented government revenues and the resulting overtaxation by the government.

How could anyone be against that? I ask that in view of the fact that the letters being received by members, not only on this side but on the other side, continue to indicate that the taxpayer needs a break. The only conclusion I can come to is that the minister refuses to be aware of this need. I think there is every reason to justify the suggestion that the government is the biggest profiteer of them all. This government is collecting more money than it needs, and I do not care about what the Minister of Finance said in reply to the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens).

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Don't let the facts sway your argument, Linc.

Mr. Alexander: This Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Revenue have both participated in this kind of blackmail. They suggest that if we do not hurry and pass the bill, the Canadian people will not be able to take advantage of tax concessions. That is a lot of boloney. I remember when we debated the bill dealing with unemployment insurance: the minister came in with the same sort of blackmail, saying that if we did not hurry up and pass the bill, the people would not get their unemployment insurance cheques. What a lot of nonsense that was, too.

We in the opposition have the right and the obligation to try to get the minister to give the taxpayers of this country a break. We intend to take full advantage of that right in order to fulfil that obligation. We suggest that this money should be left in the hands of the taxpayer in order that he in his wisdom—which at times seems to be much better than the wisdom of the government—can use it in a way to offset the adverse effects of the inflationary spiral. The minister shakes his head. He understands what I am saying. He is trying to put down the inflationary aspects which have come about as a result of the wrong and archaic fiscal and monetary policies of this government.

The taxpayer needs a break; that is why we are trying to get the minister to leave this money in the hands of the taxpayer. One can imagine the benefit this would be to the housewife. Most of us are married and know, as well as those who are not, that when you go to the store you find that it becomes more difficult each passing week to make ends meet. What we are suggesting in this motion is that