

Income Tax Act

The minister says he needs a larger staff in order to prosecute fully what he concedes should be the force of the Fisheries Act and its pollution-control provisions. If the minister needs more staff, we should not permit any false economy measures of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) to impinge upon that concept. We should not permit ourselves to be blinded by the across-the-board cut-backs in money that is available to a department. In some departments money is wasted and does not bring to society the full benefits that it should.

Action under the Criminal Code has been advocated as a better system of correcting this situation. We could have a declaration by Parliament, because pollution control is in the national interest. There is one department of government that appears to have the authority, jurisdiction, power and desire to deal with this matter. I am, of course, referring to the Department of Fisheries. We should not be penny-pinching because the life that we all know is at stake. Humanity could very easily disappear. We as one section of government, and there are others involved throughout the world, have the authority to do something about the situation. If we do not, we are simply contributing to the decline and fall of the human race, to the destruction that is caused by pollution.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): I would like to say something on this subject, Mr. Speaker, particularly in view of my well-known interest in the conservation of Atlantic salmon. My remarks will take quite a while, and as it is nearly six o'clock I wonder whether the House would agree to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**INCOME TAX ACT****AMENDMENT TO CONTINUE SURTAX**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Gray (for Mr. Benson) that Bill C-139, to amend an Act to amend the

Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, before this debate was adjourned at five o'clock I had an opportunity of discussing the bill before us for a few minutes and I dealt with three main points. The first was that the tax system now in existence is unjust. This has been admitted in the white paper on taxation which the government has tabled. An interesting collection of levies, surcharges and other taxes has been superimposed on this structure, adding to the confusion and to the inequities which exist.

The second point I made was that the purpose for which the extension of this tax into 1970 was proposed is now outdated. The Minister of Finance made it clear on June 3 that the proposal had been put forward, not to secure government revenue but rather for the purpose of stabilizing the economy. I believe the situation has changed since that time and that this reason for imposing the tax for a further year is no longer valid.

Third, I suggested that this bill was part of a grand plan devised by the government, in connection with its tax proposals, to leave the impression with the Canadian electorate, perhaps in the early part of 1972, that the new tax proposals were a big deal, affecting a reduction, when in many cases the reduction would not benefit the taxpayer to the extent suggested in the white paper which was recently tabled. As we see this charade taking place, I wonder where the backbenchers on the government side are, the great silent majority—

An hon. Member: They are in Manitoba. Where are those on your side?

Mr. Burton: They are going along with these government proposals, content to see nothing, hear nothing and do nothing. They sit across the way and they watch the circus.

An hon. Member: We are watching it now.

Mr. Burton: They can loll in their comfortable pews while they may, because I believe they do not have too long to enjoy this farce. The day of reckoning is coming; the Canadian public is becoming increasingly impatient with the proposals of this government.

Mr. Mahoney: Author?

Mr. Burton: The hon. member asked me who is the author of this. I am the author—

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): That is painfully obvious.