

Income Tax Act

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andras: He is off on his campaign to achieve his ultimate ambition and so far it might be possible, too.

An hon. Member: Explain.

Mr. Andras: I can suspect. But that is not what I am going to do. I have put my own views on record elsewhere; I think interest rates are too damned high. But I am talking about the government's credibility problem, the reversal of what they said before the election, the contrast between what many of them are saying still and what the Minister of Finance is doing. I made reference to the travels of a very respected former member of this House to Bagdad and other places east. You know, Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of an answer given us the other day by the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Wilson) when he said he did not plan any new trips.

Part of the problem, of course, let us be honest with each other, is our difficulty with our current account imbalance, our trade balance. The ultimate answer to that, of course, is to increase our exports by the processing of our goods and being able to sell them, replacing imports to this country which will stimulate the economy. We all agree about that.

I want to talk about merchandising the goods we produce to improve our balance of trade picture. I was really quite relieved when the other day the minister for international trade said he didn't contemplate going on any trips over the next three or four weeks. I say this because the last few trips he made ended in disaster. He was off to Tokyo with a bunch of shiny, new ministers, and a few weeks later we heard about the cancellation of our contract there and an indication it would have been just as well if he had not gone.

Mr. Friesen: On a point of order, I want to ask the hon. member if he is sure he is correct when he talks about cancellation of that order.

Mr. Andras: I recognize that it might not be verified. Perhaps I should have said that the contract was in some jeopardy. If the hon. member is giving me the happy news that he has the contract in his hot little fist, I would be very glad to withdraw and I would buy him a drink after five o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andras: We would be disposed, I think, to let members opposite have this bill. I think we shall have to be very patient.

Mr. Breau: If they provide answers to our questions.

Mr. Andras: Well, that is not really the problem. The technical answers coming from over there are not bad, but when they get off the script and on to policy matters they have difficulty convincing us they know what they are doing.

I want to end on a serious note. This is the final parliamentary authority on the budget presented by the finance minister in the former government, the one on which this year's economic activity to the degree the federal government does influence it, is based. For the record, without going through all

[Mr. Andras.]

the statistics again, I want to indicate that I have not seen any evidence which gives validity to the argument of the government—the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance or the President of the Treasury Board—that the situation held mystery for them after they took office, that the situation was worse than they had forecast, or that the economic indicators which were left behind in terms of inflation, unemployment, unit cost of manufacturing, balance of trade, the fiscal position and so on were in fact worse than they had anticipated.

● (1530)

Second, I want to reiterate that they themselves, in the process of making those forecasts, which turned out to be wrong and pessimistic in the face of the facts as they are now unfolding, went out and made irresponsible promises to the Canadian people, which may have had some influence on why they are sitting in the front benches opposite today, and the sooner they get on with their responsibilities and cut that umbilical cord, that protective umbrella under which they are operating, then the sooner we will see what kind of government we really have on our hands in terms of their own initiatives and ideas.

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we have been treated this afternoon to an extraordinary tour of the interior of the Liberal mind.

Mr. Friesen: It didn't take long.

Mr. Rae: I think it is perhaps opportune to pause briefly and remind ourselves that if it ever was unclear to us why the Liberals were defeated on May 22, it has certainly become clear, as we have watched the performance of the official opposition over the past three weeks, why they are no longer in power.

The hon. member who has just spoken referred to the hypocrisy of the Conservatives, and I think it is fair to say that the Conservative party was elected to do certain things which its members now say they are not able to do for a variety of reasons. There is no question that they have broken a number of promises and that they have made a number of mistakes. However, since we are here resident in a city where the world's worst films' festival is just coming to an end, I think we are entitled to ask ourselves who are the world's worst hypocrites.

Are the world's worst hypocrites those people who say they will do certain things and then turn around and do not do them, or those people who do not tell us what they would do at all but simply indicate to us that we can forget about the record of the past 16 years and assume that if they were in power they would not do again the things they did in the past? In my opinion, if we look at the record, the most hypocrites in this House are in the Liberal Party of Canada.

Where has the Liberal party been on the interest rate question? The Liberals have been everywhere and nowhere at the same time. There have been several statements from that party indicating what its position would be. We heard a statement today by the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Andras) that he thinks interest rates are too high. He