

Because of the consequences of foreign investment in this country, as well as in other countries, the basis for decision-making should be a sound, penetrating and deep understanding of what the consequences are. I have spent a certain amount of time reading literature on the subject, Mr. Speaker, and it seems to me that there has been a failure on the part of those people who are avidly determined to have foreign investment here, and on the part of those who oppose it, to make a definitive and conclusive case for their particular perception of it.

There is less blame to be laid at the door of the opponents of foreign investment because the kind of information which is required is often locked away. One of the unfortunate aspects of the operations of the Foreign Investment Review Agency is the secrecy under which it operates and the confidentiality which cloaks the agreements it arrives at with foreign investors. It makes it impossible to do the sort of careful study which is required. Governments which are convinced that foreign investment is necessary could surely obtain access to information which is required. What seems to me utterly lamentable is the fact that the information has not been obtained and the case has not been made. There are abundant reasons for questioning the value of foreign investment.

There are a variety of points which I would be happy to explore when we take up this subject again. We have now a superficial, utterly simplistic argument that what we need to have is Santa coming in again, bringing us these gifts, then we will have prosperity in this country and all will be well.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Order, please. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private Members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS— MOTIONS

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Shall all orders and items preceding item No. 126 stand?

**Some Hon. Members:** Stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Stand.

### *Income Tax Act*

● (1700)

## INCOME TAX ACT

### ADVISABILITY OF AMENDING THE ACT

**Mr. Ricardo Lopez (Châteauguay)** moved that, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Income Tax Act in order to eliminate reassessments and legal actions for the payment of income tax in arrears in cases where errors or omissions happened in taxpayers' income tax returns for the pre-1984 fiscal years.

He said: Mr. Speaker, considering the economic renewal we are experiencing and want to encourage, I suggest that the Government amend the Income Tax Act, and more specifically, Section 152, in order to eliminate reassessments and legal actions for the payment of income tax in arrears in cases where errors or omissions happened in taxpayers' income tax returns for the pre-1984 fiscal years.

I am actually suggesting a kind of general amnesty. I want to propose the following amendment as sub-paragraph 4 to Section 152:

(a) Notwithstanding paragraph 152(4)(a), as of January 1, 1984, if any taxpayer or person filing a return of income for taxation years prior to January 1, 1984, has made any misrepresentation in filing the return, the Minister shall not proceed with any reassessment, additional assessment or assessment of tax, interest or penalties under this Part.

(b) Any proceedings relating to the reassessment, additional assessment or assessment of tax interest or penalties under this Part, on the basis that the taxpayer or person filing a return of income has made any misrepresentation, and started and still pending before January 1, 1984, shall be dropped and no other proceedings undertaken for the taxation years ending before January 1, 1984.

The general principle of this amendment is to prevent the Minister from issuing reassessments in cases of misrepresentation for the years prior to January 1, 1984. The amendment does not, of course, apply to taxpayers against whom court proceedings for tax recovery have already been initiated.

This is a constructive measure for economic renewal that will allow taxpayers to start with a clean slate. Mr. Speaker, I also feel that in future, we should consider a similar amendment to Section 239 of the same Act which concerns the possibility of bringing criminal charges against taxpayers who made false returns. A provision should be included to make it possible for any person anxious to set the record straight with Revenue Canada to file returns for the years prior to January 1, 1984 without fear of criminal or judicial proceedings.

Similarly, there has to be a limit on administrative penalties on returns for pre-1984 fiscal years.

Our opinion therefore is that all those measures will make our fellow Canadians regain confidence, forget about previous years and start anew without fearing that they might lose everything they had before 1984. In addition, these amendments are very much in keeping with the new government's ideology and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.