

Income Tax

I would like to quote from David Vickers, a former Attorney General of British Columbia, a very distinguished lawyer in B.C. He said:

• (1810)

The interpretation which courts will place on the first freedom, the freedom of conscience, is not really known. I suggest that if it's to mean anything, it must be a guarantee, not just to believe in something, but also to put those beliefs into action.

Freedom of conscience is not just to be able to maintain a private inward belief but to be able to act in accordance with your beliefs. Certainly when it comes to a basic question such as whether or not we are going to support the military, I think that has to be recognized. There is nothing in this motion that goes beyond what are the reasonable and just limits that any society can impose. Without waiting for a court decision I would urge the Government to make provisions so that freedom of conscience can be a reality for people instead of just nice words on a piece of paper.

The peace trust people have organized themselves into a charitable society known as Conscience Canada which is actively working to have the Government make those changes and I urge it to adopt the motion which I am presenting which would accomplish that. I urge this action to provide freedom of conscience at a practical level so that our Constitution is effective, rather than having to wait for the courts.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there are pragmatic reasons why this motion should be adopted. The practical reason for supporting this Bill, even if there were no conscientious objectors, is that we need to provide money for peace research and for education. Already our world is spending far too much money on weapons of destruction. This has two effects. First of all it drains money from other projects. There is still a myth abroad that somehow military expenditures create jobs, but dollar for dollar it has been shown that this is not an efficient way of creating jobs. Military expenditures, dollar for dollar, are one of the most inefficient ways of creating employment. This is one area where there has to be some education of the public. This is one area where we want to see more research so that people and industries that are already engaged in military projects would be able to make the transition to more constructive forms of human endeavour.

Earlier this week the CBC had a program marking the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. Just as an indication of how much arms budgets are spiralling out of control, the CBC reported that today the United States spends more money on military music than it does on its budget for the United Nations. Yet there continue to be some very well orchestrated complaints about the cost of the United Nations.

Canada has a military budget of \$9.4 billion, more than four times the amount we allocate to international development which is \$2.1 billion. We are spending four times as much money preparing for war as we are in trying to correct the basic human situation that leads to war. This whole scale of things is completely out of control. Regarding the peace tax, people say, let us vote with our money, let us put our money into peace education and research and try to redress that

balance. What is the Government afraid of? Why will it not agree to this kind of proposal?

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, world armaments threaten to destroy us all. The balance of terror is becoming badly unbalanced. The United States plans to spend \$26 billion on star wars research and we are concerned about Canadian complicity in that. Even though the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has given an official "no" to that star wars research on the part of the Canadian Government, the door seems to be open for individual Canadian firms to participate. It reminds me of the old song "Your lips tell me no, no, but there is yes, yes in your eyes". Along with the "yes, yes", there are the dollar signs in the eyes of some Canadian manufacturers who hope to make a quick buck out of increasing the balance of nuclear terror in our world.

Our leaders raise the question of Canadian complicity in the making of nuclear bombs with the use of Canadian uranium. One year ago the Prime Minister spoke at the St. Francis Xavier University, September 28, 1984, and he said preservation of peace is "the central issue confronting our generation". But what has he done since then? Very little.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Canadians would like to see more positive leadership from the Government on the subject of peace. They would also like to contribute directly themselves. The peace tax fund would enable them to do so. It provides a sensible alternative to the madness of the arms race, an alternative that takes account of conscience. I urge the acceptance of this motion upon all Members of the House.

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking to this motion today. I know the Hon. Member who has brought this before the House today is a responsible and conscientious parliamentarian and his remarks in favour of the motion are made with the best of intentions, I am sure.

This motion has obviously been put forward so that this House can show its commitment to the pursuit of world peace and so that Canada can reinforce its position of leadership in the worldwide efforts for security from the dangers posed by the very existence of nuclear weapons.

Although I agree with the ultimate goal of this motion, world peace, there are enough problems with some of the implications that I hope this House will not send it on as a concrete proposal for legislation. I think every Member of this House will agree that the people of Canada, indeed this Government, are seriously concerned about world peace and that they are anxious to take every opportunity to express this concern as a high priority.

The motion on the floor shares this goal. This motion if enacted as legislation would allow Canadian taxpayers to earmark a certain part of the taxes they pay for special purposes. This tax revenue would be committed toward the activities of a registered international organization involved in peace research and education. The funds that would go to this use would be the equivalent proportion of the tax dollar that