

Income Tax Act

committee, of which I was a member for more than a year, clearly was in favour in its majority of supporting the Montreal and Vancouver initiative. There were those who were against—

Mr. Cassidy: That is not true.

Mr. Layton:—and they are the most vocal members of the committee, Mr. Speaker, and they will give the impression to the press that their views stand as the opinion of the committee. However, I stand here and assure the House that there was a majority of us on the committee who felt that it was a good idea.

● (1530)

Mr. Cassidy: That is not true.

Mr. Layton: All we have to do is to ask members of the committee. The truth is that this concept will continue the feeling or the impression that it is a very major concern to Montreal, as all of us who live there know. We have watched our role and our opportunity as an outlet for Canadian skills and international services diminish in favour of points west, in particular Toronto.

Along comes an idea, the Government recognizes that it is a good one and promotes it. We in Montreal are very pleased. However, I would certainly want to correct the idea that the committee was stacked. If one thing should go on record, it is that both opposition Parties were divided on the issue. It might surprise the Hon. Member to know that in a vote his Party was divided, as was the Official Opposition. It was also divided on the government side.

It was recognition of whether or not regions like Montreal and Vancouver would have certain opportunities and rights in the future. A vote could have come at any time, and it came at committee in the absence of those from the Opposition who supported this particular motion. Maybe that was a surprise. Maybe it was well planned. However, I can only assure the House that at any time when that vote would have been taken, a majority of the finance committee would have been in favour of it, as was shown in the final announcement of that election.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, to us Montrealers and to our fellow Canadians in Vancouver, opening banking centres is an element, a symbolic indication of the special values of these two international cities in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Parry: Mr. Speaker, in response to the Hon. Member I must say that perhaps he did not observe the degree and intensity of some of the conflicts which I was able to identify in just one appearance at the finance committee on this particular matter. I can assure him that there will be no kudos in our caucus to any degree about the division on this particular legislation. However, I must recall to the Hon. Member the very words of the Chairman of the committee, which I believe

he heard, when he indicated on a particular vote that he had to cast his vote with the Government.

I am not too sure of the direction in which the intervention of the Hon. Member is proceeding. If he wishes simply to demonstrate his dedication to the interests of the business community of the city which he calls home, I am sure that all of us would accept it as a given and that none of us would wish to challenge it, as he would certainly not challenge the commitment of other members of the Progressive Conservative Party to the business interests of the cities they represent.

However, I would have to point out that in the divisions which I saw at this particular committee, the divisions by way of vote and the divisions by way of opinion, I felt that the basic purpose of the committee was being undermined in some sense when the Chairman declared that his function was to vote with the Government. To me that was a notion which almost reached the point of absurdity, particularly since at the other committees before which I have appeared there had always been declarations of the Chairmen that they were in fact the masters of their own procedure.

I commend to the Hon. Member a careful study of what happened in that particular committee, before he commits himself to such a drastic and dramatic degree of revision in the rewriting of the history of the committee hearings. I commend to him the committee record and a brief conversation with his colleague from Scarborough on the particular interests involved in the formulation of the report on this matter.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I recall the Chairman of the finance committee making a comment when the matter of banking centres was discussed—and it was reported in the press—that the whole proposal belonged in the waste-basket. When the vote came on the proposal, there was a complete turnaround and the spirit of reform, which is supposed to permeate the finance committee, went out of the window. The Chairman did docilely what the nabobs in the Department of Finance wanted. He did what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) wanted. He fell in line. He did the bidding. He sat up and wagged his tail, voted, and broke the tie.

I think that needs to be explained to the Hon. Member who just presented the view that somehow or other the divisions which may exist in caucuses of the House were extended to a committee which, in the spirit of reform, is supposed to look at a proposal and make a decision on the basis of what it feels is beneficial to the country as a whole. I think the committee fell down in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry) have a rebuttal, or should I recognize another Hon. Member on debate, because there are only 30 seconds remaining?

Mr. Parry: Fine.