

Income Tax Act

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Chairman, today there is much sense in what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is saying. I agree that if we are to be consequent with the ruling you made on Friday to defer examination of certain clauses in the bill and to revert to it only with unanimous consent, unless we have examined the following clauses, if we are to be consequent with that ruling, I feel we should follow the route indicated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

[English]

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Chairman, I think you will recall the circumstances under which this matter was put over. I do not think there is any question but that the matter was set aside for the benefit of Your Honour so that Your Honour could have an opportunity to consider the procedural aspect of the amendment and so that we could return to this matter, which is the most important provision in the bill, before the terms of closure take effect. I think the implication was clear that Your Honour would have an opportunity, as Your Honour indicated, to consider the matter over the weekend, to come back to this House at the first opportunity, and to give us the basis of your decision as to whether the amendment should be allowed to go forward. In any event, eventually we would then be able to revert to that particular clause so that we could have an opportunity to discuss it.

We are in a very peculiar situation, and any other interpretation of that understanding or inference on the basis of our discussions last Friday as to the basis upon which this government and this Minister of Finance operate would put us into a most unusual situation. We would be in a situation whereby, whenever Your Honour had any problem which had to be considered at length, we simply would not be in a position to co-operate with the Chair or to allow the Chair a reasonable opportunity to carry on because we would know that because the government imposes time allocation on almost every financial bill which comes before the House, that would effectively mean that we would not get back to a particular provision.

The only point I make is that I do not think on a Monday the Minister of Finance would want to be unreasonable, but he knows that this provision is crucial and important. I agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I too have received many representations from credit unions and cooperative societies in my province with respect to this matter, but the minister and the parliamentary secretary should have some common sense and not preclude us from having a further discussion of this particular provision. It seems to me that the minister does a disservice to the performance of this parliament if he takes this inflexible and intransigent stand, which would deprive us of further discussion of this important and key provision. I know the minister feels terribly uneasy about this, but this matter should be faced by this parliament.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is accusing me of doing something I have not done. According to the rules we are on clause 32. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre says he wants to discuss other things. It is not I who

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

conducts the proceedings, and I am being criticized by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar. The other day on television I heard his leader telling the nation that we do not want to discuss RRSPs and other provisions in this bill. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has just proposed that we do that in this House, but who do I see getting up? The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar! He says he does not want to talk about RRSPs and so forth, but his own leader was complaining on television last Saturday that we do not have the time to discuss those things. I would rather respect the judgment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre than the judgment of a person who does not even listen to his own boss.

I will abide by the rules of this House, as I always do. I have not said anything so far, and I do not even want to comment, but I think we should respect the wish of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who wants to discuss a very important item in this bill which needs some explanation. I would like to give that explanation to the House and, in so doing, meet the wishes of the Leader of the Opposition, which are not the wishes of his cronies in the House of Commons.

Mr. Raiton: Mr. Chairman, I want to support the opinion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that we should discuss the provision regarding registered retirement savings plans before this bill is completed. That is very important to many of my constituents. I have one or two letters which I could show Your Honour right now, but the main thing is that this provision be discussed because I believe there is an injustice which might be corrected. I am sure the Minister of Finance will do so. The important thing is to discuss the bill clause by clause, and in particular clause 34.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Chairman, I wonder why we have all that hullabaloo. It is very simple; my colleague from York-Simcoe asked you if you were ready to rule on my amendment. You did yourself ask the House to defer the debate on clause 30 in order to have time to consider my amendment. So let us come back to my amendment. That is what was deferred. Since your ruling is ready, why do you not make it known to us so we can carry on our discussion on clause 30?

The hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine is going on an adventure when he talks like that. So, Mr. Chairman, if possible I would like to hear your ruling on my amendment now so that we can consider it at this time.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I may make a suggestion which might be a bit of a compromise. I suggest that we consent to Your Honour's suggestion that you now give the ruling on the amendment to clause 30 so that we will know whether that amendment is before us, but that we then go back to clauses 32, 33, and 34. I am quite prepared, after clause 34 has been disposed of, to go back to the earlier clauses, but I remind hon. members on this