

Income Tax Act and Related Acts

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): The fact that the Government refused to cap, to put some kind of a ceiling on this, to say that it surely would not be fair for anyone to pay more than \$5 to \$10 a month, maybe that is even high, is insensitive of the Government. Five dollars a month, after all, is \$60 a year in new taxation for people who have to make these calls time after time. For there to be no recognition of these differences in Canada is just an indication of how insensitively this Government has been guided in these areas by a Minister whose base is on Bay Street and who has practically no recognition, no sense at all, of where ordinary Canadians live.

Mr. Cassidy: Shame.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): I realize that my time is practically up and yet there is so much to be said about the way in which this Government has reduced the progressive nature of our income tax system, about the way in which the wealthy are the prime beneficiaries of the tax changes that have taken place. There is so much that could be said. I am grateful for the fact that my colleague, the Member for Ottawa Centre, has more time as the lead speaker on these matters in order to get those points out.

Ordinary Canadians, lower-income Canadians who got put on the tax rolls during this Government's terms of office, are now asked to be grateful because they are going to be allowed to get back off the tax rolls before the next election, know that they have been ripped off for three years by a government that does not have the good sense to tax the income where it is, whether it is in the hands of rich individuals or in large corporations, and to get the burden of the services of the Canadian Government spread over everyone fairly.

I realize that my time is up. I want to say that there is reason enough for us to vote against Bill C-139 to continue our opposition to the so-called tax reform and for the New Democratic Party to enter the next election campaign telling Canadians, "You want tax fairness, elect New Democrats in order to get it. You are not going to get it from the Conservatives and the Liberals who mostly built this system".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Danis): On questions and comments, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps).

Ms. Copps: Given the Member's comment about the NDP in tax matters, I would like to ask him whether he would be willing to introduce a measure to plug the NDP tax scam that is currently being carried out in most major municipalities across this nation, where NDP local candidates are using federal tax deductions to credit their campaigns. Would he be willing to plug that NDP tax scam?

● (1410)

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, this is a question that is designed to be embarrassing in a partisan way. It is suggested that New Democratic federal associations have used this means in Toronto. The question is whether other

Parties have used it and what other possibilities for financing activities exist like large corporate donations which are a small thanks to the Liberal Party for all the gifts that the corporate sector has received over the years.

These are nice questions. The law was passed by Liberals. The Liberals governed this country for most of the period during which the election financing laws were in effect. After the next election, we will see who forms the Government. I expect we will receive advice from the election expenses commission on what should be done. We will see who has the opportunity to reform the law and we will see, if the Liberals are elected, if they carry through the kind of reform the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) is suggesting.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did not answer my question. He may be aware that in the Province of Ontario, the Liberals do not run at the local level on a Party ticket. For a long time, the NDP has been running a tax scam, using taxpayers' money to get tax credits for municipal candidates. Would the Hon. Member be willing to move an amendment which would plug that NDP tax scam?

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, this is quite a partisan matter, not that there is anything wrong with that in this partisan Chamber of ours. To call it a tax scam is the kind of emotive language that the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, (Ms. Copps) likes to indulge in. If it were a scam, presumably the RCMP would have been investigating and laying charges. I have not seen that happen. I am sure that the Conservatives, who love New Democrats like brothers, would have been more than happy to instruct the RCMP to investigate that if it were the case.

Clearly a law is not being broken. Whether this is against the spirit of the law or not is a good question to be debated. We probably will not have the time to debate it adequately this afternoon, but I would suggest that the Hon. Member be precise in her language. The law has not been broken. If it had been, there would have been prosecutions.

New Democrats use the letter of the law to finance their efforts at the municipal level, and because income taxation is provincial and federal, there is no municipal tax. They use these provisions to strengthen the Party at the grassroots level in order to support efforts in federal election campaigns. If the law were to be changed to make it a scam, let the prosecutions occur afterward. In the meantime, the Hon. Member is trying to get political capital out of something her Party created.

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the time is just about up and that there is some general agreement that we will go to a vote in a minute, so I will ask a question of my hon. colleague from Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Epp) which sums up what third reading of this Bill is all about, the question of whether or not Conservative tax reform is really fair.

Does the Hon. Member believe that the Conservative tax reform is fair when it allows 60,000 profitable corporations to continue to pay no tax every year? Does he believe tax reform