

Income Tax Act

lives they have ever been accused of any crime. They have not even been charged with careless driving or anything else before. To be accused of not paying their proper taxes casts a reflection on these good citizens and sooner than say anything they pay and think they are through with the matter but they are not finished with it. No one ever gets a clearance. They have not got a receipt to show they have paid. I maintain that the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) was far too reasonable when he suggested three years. I maintain that if the government are one-tenth as smart as they would like people to believe they are, surely they can straighten up in a year the accounts of individual taxpayers with annual incomes of \$10,000 or less. It is just as easy as that. As the hon. member for Kamloops pointed out, there is a procedure whereby the department can charge fraud if there have been attempts to defraud and recover from the taxpayers.

Many groups and individuals endorsed what I had to say along this line last year. Probably the minister and the house would like to know who some of the organizations are. The stand I took has been endorsed by the Middlesex county council and by the counties of Elgin, Huron, Perth, Lanark, Grey, Haldimand, Bruce, Lincoln, Waterloo, Brant, Haldimand, Halton and Lambton. All these counties have endorsed my stand and I was not aware of it until it was brought to my attention about three weeks before the present session began. I did not solicit their support. I did not even know they were interested until it was brought to my attention. Copies of the resolution were forwarded to the county of Middlesex by the Middlesex county federation of agriculture, the Ontario farmers' union, several branches of the women's institute including the women's institute of southwestern Ontario at their meeting in Leamington and the Malden women's institute of Essex South, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the chambers of commerce of many Canadian cities and the Arthur farmers' union. There are many service clubs which take no part in politics—it is part of their creed, shall I say, to stay out of partisan politics—that are in favour of it also but they do not want to go on record or to be known as being in favour of it. They do not want it to be construed that they are politically biased one way or another.

Mr. McCann: What was the resolution?

Mr. White (Middlesex East): That all these incomes of \$10,000 and less be processed and that a final receipt be given within 12 months from April 30 in the year in which the returns were filed. The Arthur farmers' union demands that returns be cleared within two

[Mr. White (Middlesex East).]

years of filing and at that time be cleared finally except in cases of fraud. I again warn the minister of the rising tide of resentment against him and his department. Any answer to the contrary is more or less an admission of inefficiency. If they say they cannot do it in this time, let me point out that there are many things they can do. They can get ready for an election in a few days and they can get the returns in in much less time than that.

I want to bring to the attention of the minister—I think I will come to it later anyway—what Eaton's and Simpsons are able to do in their mail order department. I believe some 50,000 orders a day come in and that most of them are processed within 20 minutes from the time they arrive and are on their way within 24 hours.

Mr. Harris: They have more employees than the minister has.

Mr. Rowe: I doubt that they have.

Mr. Lennard: Don't say that.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): Even if they had twice as many employees, look at the length of time you have.

Mr. Lennard: Five years, ten years, fifteen years.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): The income tax department may make mistakes with impunity but not so the taxpayer. He is branded a crook and he is penalized at compound interest. In some cases, years go by before the taxpayer knows a thing about the matter and then the department comes along and says that he owes them so much; maybe it is \$100 but with the interest on it over the years and the penalty, it amounts to more than the original error. If the taxpayer knew of it in time, he could have reviewed the matter and he could have paid the amount. But as the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) has pointed out, no one knows where he is at.

Mr. Lennard: You mean in the tax office.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): Then we come to the question of estates. I am going to use a rather harsh word. In some of these cases I have advised the taxpayer to appeal the case and to go to the appeal board. Then two or three months later some of the officials have come along and said, "There is an error in this computation and so the tax is not \$600 but it is \$200". Rather than go to the appeal board the taxpayers settle. The taxpayer is in this bad fix. He has not obtained settlement. He just thinks he has. The department can come back a year later or ten years later or they can come back when the