

Private Members' Business

their GST back as well as not have the arrears payable on something they only found out that was due. It is crazy.

On that note, I will allow my colleague from Winnipeg—St. Boniface to finish with my time.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to stand in the House tonight to address the motion which perhaps for the purpose of the viewers I should explain. It is basically to reduce the amount of red tape, give a choice if you wish, to seniors who now have to pay quarterly instalments providing they need to pay \$1,000 of income tax. This is a laudable initiative and I want to commend my colleague, the member for Winnipeg—St. James, for his sensitivity towards seniors. He has recognized, as many other members have, that our seniors have built this country.

[Translation]

They built this country. Today we have what they left to us and I believe that it is up to us, as parliamentarians, to try to make life easier and simpler for them. We now have this splendid opportunity to do just that.

I received telephone calls as well as letters, and people have come to see me, in my office in Winnipeg, on that issue. To some, it is annoying because it shows a certain lack of sensitivity towards them, even though this was not necessarily intentional. These people used to pay taxes at the end of the year, and now they are faced with a new system. This creates some confusion. Sometimes they forget, sometimes they underestimate their income and this creates all kinds of problems and headaches. There is simply no reason for that to happen.

I just want to say that I, as the member of Parliament for St. Boniface, support this motion.

[English]

As far as I am concerned, this type of question should not necessarily be in the House of Commons simply because it makes so much sense. It needs to be looked at and it should be looked at immediately. It should be rectified.

[Translation]

It seems to me that this could be easily rectified by experts in the field, so that it would not even be necessary for the House to spend time on this.

This proposal should not require a long debate, because it makes so much sense that we should simply go ahead with it. We know that our seniors deserve that kind of consideration.

[English]

I would like to propose that while we are looking for this kind of consideration for seniors, we should extend the net a bit. What about other citizens today who are similarly affected, who could profit from this kind of review and who might benefit from some changes in the act so that they too can reduce the amount of paperwork. The government may also reduce its red tape and somehow we can do this more easily than has been the case in the past.

What we really want to do is give people a choice, *un simple choix*. We are not saying it should be done one way or the other. There are a number of ways this can be done. Our job surely should be to reach out and respond as sensitively as possible to all of those particular needs of seniors and others if appropriate. It is appropriate in certain cases. I am thinking of small business persons and other individuals in Canadian society.

I believe it would reduce bureaucracy. Certainly it would reduce the work of those who have to fill in those forms continually and who are frustrated by over-estimations or under-estimations of revenue, who receive those letters that are processed by computers that are sometimes very insensitive, rather rude and upset people a great deal.

At the very minimum—and I hope it is not the way we are going to go—we must at least look at the limit of income tax that is now paid and ensure that a whole lot of other people do not unnecessarily fill in those forms that take up so much time and are not terribly productive.

While we are doing that, I would hope that we might look at other types of reform. I am really suggesting that this committee of finance has a great deal of work to do. Not only can it look at this, but I think it should and I support it.

At the same time they might want to extend their mandate and, perhaps, set up some new objectives and look at the tremendous amount of taxation they have imposed on the middle class of Canada, which is really the motor of our economic infrastructure in this country.