

*Income Tax Act*

before the House. Again, I say it is the responsibility of hon. members also to co-operate with the Chair in this respect.

In connection with reasoned amendments, the same as in connection with all other amendments and motions, it is the duty of the Chair to enforce the principle of relevancy and it is the responsibility of members, as active participants in the parliamentary process, to respect that principle. That is why it is so difficult for hon. members to propose a reasoned amendment which in effect is not an expanded negative. If an amendment, reasoned or otherwise, is only an expanded negative it is, of course, out of order because it is well known that the way for hon. members to express their objection to a motion before the House is to vote against it. If it is much more than that and goes beyond the four corners of the motion before the House, then it offends the principle of relevancy.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Therefore, in my view hon. members should not be surprised that it is so difficult in practice, from a procedural standpoint, to propose procedurally acceptable reasoned amendments. I think that hon. members expect the Chair to ensure that Parliamentary debates remain logical, meaningful and relevant from a procedural standpoint. Because of this the Chair has to look with extreme caution on so-called reasoned amendments.

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) suggested that the time has come to enlarge the opportunity for debate. I suggest to him and all hon. members that this is not the responsibility of the Chair. If hon. members wish the rules to be changed to provide for enlarged debate, they will themselves have to change the rules which guide the Chair.

Having said all this, I am prepared to look at the amendment with considerable sympathy. The hon. member for Edmonton West, having heard me go into some detail to explain why the amendment is perhaps out of order and the reasoned amendment should not be accepted, will probably be surprised if I tell him that I am ready to accept it. The reason is that this is perhaps a borderline case. I admit that it is very difficult. It has been very difficult in recent weeks and months to determine which reasoned amendments ought to be accepted and which ought to be refused. This one, I suggest to the House, is a borderline case.

In view of the fact that the whole matter of reasoned amendments is being reviewed by the Chair, perhaps hon. members will want the Chair to exercise some leniency and allow debate to continue on the reasoned amendment. At the same time, I would like to stress that hon. members should not think that the way has been opened for all possible reasoned amendments, which would make Parliamentary debate just about impossible.

I might say I suspect that whether or not we have this amendment before us, the debate which will take place tonight and perhaps in subsequent days will pretty well turn around the points which have been raised in the amendment. It would be very difficult for the Chair to

[Mr. Speaker.]

rule out of order considerations which relate in some way to the substance of the reasoned amendment now before us.

We may have a test as to whether we are making a mistake by accepting this kind of reasoned amendment by a subamendment which may be proposed later and which might indicate how far away we would be getting from the motion now before the House. However, that could be a test which might be useful as a guide for the Speaker on future occasions.

Having said all this and having invited hon. members to realize the difficulty with which the Chair is faced in this situation, I feel in the circumstances that I should allow the amendment and put it to the House.

I repeat to hon. members that in the next few days I will continue to consider the general matter of reasoned amendments. The next time one is submitted we may have a set of rules which will establish when, how and in what circumstances such amendments can be accepted. I am afraid it might make it a little more difficult for hon. members to propose amendments which will be acceptable in view of the precedents.

If hon. members will allow, I will now read for the benefit of the House the motion proposed by the hon. member for Edmonton West, seconded by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard):

That all the words after "That" be struck out and the following substituted:

"this House deeply concerned with unacceptable levels of inflation, persisting unemployment and stagnant industry and conscious of the necessity for meaningful tax reform declines to give second reading to a bill which does not provide sufficient stimulus to the economy of Canada with appropriate tax cuts and incentives, does not contain adequate tax exemptions and is not calculated to materially improve business and labour conditions in Canada now or in the foreseeable future."

Before the hon. member for Edmonton West is given the floor I would like to refer briefly to the procedural objection he took this afternoon to some aspects of the bill now before us. The difficulties with which the Chair is faced in this situation were also referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. He and the hon. member for Edmonton West suggested that the bill before us is in a substantive way different from the provisions of the schedule attached to the ways and means motion. He is probably right. I say "probably" because it will take the Chair a long time to analyse the 560 or so pages of the bill and collate them with the schedule attached to the ways and means motion. I suggest to hon. members that the Chair should not be requested to do this. I do not think it is the duty of the Chair to perhaps suspend the sitting of the House for a few weeks while I take this huge book, try to compare it with the schedule attached to the bill and see whether there are substantive differences.

Perhaps the difficulty we are faced with arises from the fact there has been agreement among responsible representatives of the parties of this House that we should follow a new system. Instead of having a generally termed ways and means resolution, it was agreed between representatives of parties that we should have