

Income Tax Act

hopefully, to survive. However, when we look at those farm machinery dealers in the three prairie provinces, we find that because of the slowing down of the agriculture industry a number of companies have either had to consolidate or go broke. That is perhaps the only advantage one has of running his own business. He has the privilege of going broke.

We see a consolidation of business taking place without any corresponding initiatives by the government to overcome the economic plight which they face. Instead, this government is moving in the opposite direction. We see a massive consolidation of small corporations which become big corporations. Small businesses, particularly in rural areas, are the lifeblood of small communities. I notice that the Minister of Agriculture has now redirected the Department of Agriculture toward the provision of stronger rural communities. Perhaps this has occurred as a result of the ministers of agriculture in the prairie provinces taming the minister in respect of his agricultural adjustment policy. This, in my opinion, is long over due. We need a new enthusiasm for small corporations, small businesses and private, independent intreprenurships so that they might be fostered and developed. We do not see any provision for that in this tax bill. It is for this reason I rise in my place today to make a most vigorous objection to this provision in the bill.

• (3:50 p.m.)

There are now, I believe, five provinces which have urged this government to postpone implementation of this measure which bears on corporate domestic and international income. It is far to complex. Certainly, the Leader of the official opposition put forward very recently a compromise proposal that we pass the sections of the bill which deal with the increased exemptions and so on, because we would seem to be getting into a situation here where we are running a race with the clock. I believe a tax bill of this nature, magnitude and complexity should not be proceeded with on the basis of a race with the clock. So, I believe the Minister of Finance and members on the opposite side of the House owe it to themselves, and to the people of Canada, to urgently consider the proposal put forward by my leader.

Mr. Osler: Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question of the hon. member?

Mr. Mazankowski: When I am finished, Mr. Chairman, he can ask me a question. The other point which concerns me is the whole climate in which small businesses must operate and the fact that consideration of small business is generally absent from the formulation of government policy in this area. We know that governmental policy is influenced by big business and big unions. I believe everyone in this House of Commons should examine very seriously exactly where we are headed in the matter of small business in this country, because I believe there is something about small business which is unique. A man must have an opportunity to develop his potential to the maximum of his ability so that he might utilize his initiative in a spirit of pride. The trend to bigness and the trend to big corporations produces an important part of our problem today. The labour unrest and the pressure of big unions have been a result of our total approach to bigness. As I

said before, the dominating forces of both unions and big business play a very important role in respect of government policy. We know small businessmen do not have an effective organization and therefore are not readily able to analyse and influence government decisions. They lack the opportunity, the expertise and the organization to put forth their proposals in a firm and articulate way.

The other point is that small businesses lack any political clout because they do not control large blocks of votes. I believe members in this House of Commons who have small business entities and enterprises in their constituencies certainly should rise in their places to urge the government to give some consideration to streamlining this bill so that it would be easily understood by the average person and small businessman generally. These are the average people who look upon the government as infringing upon the decision-making functions they have. When we have a situation wherein 46 per cent of the gross national product is being extracted by the three levels of government, we find we have a network of regulations which do nothing but bring about increased frustration and anxiety for the average businessman. I would hope, throughout the reshaping process which is taking place in this country in respect of small business, that the government would step back a little and have a look at the situation in an objective way because the three bills before us now—Bill C-259, the competition bill and the amendments to the Labour Code—could very well change the whole structure of the small business community in this country.

Rather than the small businessman being soaked with an increased rate of taxation, I would hope there would be some incentive for new independent entrepreneurs to develop, to grow and to help the economic climate in this country, because in that manner I believe we would develop major corporations such as Versatile, the Canadian farm machinery manufacturer in Winnipeg. I would also hope that we would make it possible for more organizations such as this to develop. While governments probably have assisted organizations like Versatile in some way, I believe as we look around this country we will see there are many more innovators, if I may use that word, who could develop products which could be sold both domestically and internationally. In this way jobs could be provided for Canadians, revenue for governments at all levels, and certainly a better climate of enthusiasm in this country.

Mr. Osler: I have a very small interjection, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the hon. member for Vegreville has any suggestions to make in respect of his concern about the race with the clock to which he referred. I wonder whether he has any suggestions concerning how we could beat this clock instead of being confused by it. It has occurred to me that in the mother of Parliaments, where the Conservative party happens to be the majority party at the moment, they worked out a time allocation which enabled them to consider the whole vast problem of entering into ECM in a matter of a week. If the party in Canada shares the enthusiasm of the party in Britain in respect of time allocation, I wonder whether some way might be found to deal with this tax bill which, although complicated, is somewhat less complicated than the ECM problem in