

Income Tax Act

Mr. Laing: I think a great deal of time has been offered to the opposition to debate this bill. Yesterday I heard the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) speaking on the bill. He did not say one single word about the bill. He should have been speaking on the motion today because all he was doing yesterday was condemning us for what he termed closure. He had no intention at all of paying attention to any part of the bill.

Mr. Baldwin: No, no.

Mr. Laing: That has happened in a great number of cases. I do not want to be unfair to members opposite. There was a good debate on agricultural matters and a good debate on the matter of co-operatives. Apart from those, no attention has been paid to any part of this bill in the 44 or 47 days so far.

It is my opinion that the people of Canada will support this government very strongly indeed for the action it has taken to come to a decision now in respect of this matter. If there are industries in Canada which suffer as the result of putting this bill through, they will be heard. Amendments will be made.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Why not do it now?

Mr. Laing: Is the hon. member ready at this time to tell me how the bill should be amended? I do not think he suggested any amendments to the bill.

Mr. Alkenbrack: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My interjection was made because the minister is admitting that amendments are necessary. Why not make them before we pass the bill?

Mr. Laing: I am about through, Mr. Speaker. If the economy of the country demands amendments in respect of taxes, any sensible, honest, good government will make those amendments from time to time. I think the people of Canada will support this government for taking action on this bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing), the member for Vancouver South, treated us to a mild but quite irrelevant history of his career in Ottawa. He said that the bill is comprehensible to him. If this is so, he joins a select company, about as select a company as he will be with when he soon joins the other place.

Mr. Stanfield: There are far more in the Senate who understand this bill.

Mr. Fairweather: I was disappointed with the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). He is usually a convincing debater. Today we were treated to a rather shallow apologia because the government in all its years has made no serious effort to reform the rules of Parliament and bring in any workable system of allocation of time. The House leader said that the government now weighs editorials before it proceeds with motions to allocate time. It is a pity the government did not weigh this bill. It is also a curious way to find out how the people feel about this legislation.

The President of the Privy Council also spoke of an inert opposition, forgetting of course that it was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) who made the concerted and oft-time lonely attack on the white paper which resulted in many worth-while changes.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fairweather: Do not put your trust in princes is an admonition which should be in the forefront of our minds as we wrestle with the bill which is the subject of the minister's motion. We are being treated to a curious phenomenon in parliamentary life with the Senate being softened up by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson). The minister said: Pass the bill and I will give you some goodies at the next session, all the while stifling any attempt to secure amendments in this place.

• (3:00 p.m.)

It seems curious that though we are to debate third reading under the restriction of an allocation of time motion the Senate is given an undertaking that the bill will be amended at the next session. Surely this is one of the cruder attempts at a *quid pro quo*. It emphasizes the point that the full implications of the bill are not yet understood, not only by this Parliament, with the exception of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing), but by the government itself. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Roberts) said last weekend, this bill is not tax reform. And as my own leader has suggested, it is a bill conceived in the 'sixties, whereas the dilemma confronting the government is that it finds itself facing the problems of the 'seventies.

I wonder whether supporters of the government ever bother to read the words of their erstwhile great leader, Sir Wilfred Laurier, who said during the navy debate in 1913:

Sir, these rules are to be swept away, they are to be ridden over roughshod, they are to be put aside, and we are to have the gag substituted for them. And what is the pretence? The pretence is that there has been obstruction in the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for York-Simcoe rising on a point of order?

Mr. Roberts: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am. If the hon. member had been in the House earlier he would have heard me deny that those remarks attributed to me were reported correctly.

Mr. Fairweather: As a matter of fact, I was in the House when the hon. member made his protest. And I was present when he said that this bill is not tax reform.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Roberts: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I have this morning been in touch with the organizers of the conference. They assure me that the remarks attributed to me were not said.

Mr. Fairweather: I know the Prime Minister is uneasy when his parliamentary secretaries go about the country. But I recognize the rule. I respect the Speaker. The hon. member has said he did not say those words and I accept