

Income Tax

Another factor contributing to unease is the obvious dishonesty in so much that the government says and does, even in its day-to-day operations. Even people who can tolerate a good deal of the truth-stretching that is being done in an election campaign are having some difficulty in understanding why a government with a fresh majority mandate cannot and will not level with them. Take the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald).

An hon. Member: You take him.

Mr. Stanfield: On Friday he said that by 1985 the country will have a surplus of petroleum. Then, when he was pressed on the matter on Monday, he conceded that by "surplus" he meant only surplus so far as the area of Canada served by Canadian petroleum plus 250,000 barrels a day going to Montreal was concerned. When he watched over the weekend, as he must have, that this was interpreted by the press as indicating that Canada was going to have self sufficiency by 1985, did he come clean with the Canadian people and did he say "you misunderstood me"? No, he basked in all the glory of that self sufficiency by 1985.

Reading the Prime Minister's speech one comes away with the impression that he believes that somehow things are out of sorts because the country and the world have let him down—poor fellow. I suggest that he pull himself together and face up to the reality that a lot of the problem in the Canadian context today is generated by the wanton let down at the government end of the bargain.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: It is over seven months since the government has had its mandate renewed and given a fresh chance to show what it meant by leadership. Even given the absurdities of the reversal by the Minister of Finance of his position—of course he changes his position completely after each election—and I do not want to be offensive, but he is like a snake changing its skin—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): How about changing the metaphor?

Mr. Stanfield: I will change the metaphor.

An hon. Member: How about a silver fox changing its colour?

Mr. Stanfield: I ask the minister through you, Madam Speaker, where is there some demonstration of leadership? I am sorry if I upset my friends in the NDP by talking frankly about their proposal with regard to Syncrude, but I think one has to be frank in opposition, just as I expect the government to be frank in government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Let me be completely frank with the minister. I do not really have very much faith that voluntary guidelines will ever be made to work in this country, but I have been prepared to support the Minister of Finance in some honest effort towards that goal, if that is what he is trying to accomplish.

• (1530)

I cannot even find out what the minister is trying to do, but if he is trying to reach some consensus on guidelines in this country in terms of profits, in terms of interest, in terms of incomes generally—if he is trying to get a consensus on incomes policy in this country, I have been prepared to support him. I will still support him. I wish him luck, and I will do anything I can in this House and in this country to help him achieve that consensus, if he really makes an honest effort to achieve this.

But I must say to the minister through you, Madam Speaker, that I do not think we are getting an honest effort. If the minister were taking an honest approach why, for example, would he talk about the evils of high profits to a labour group, and talk about the evils of high wage and salary settlements to a predominantly business group?

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): That is not what I said.

Mr. Hees: That is known as the Liberal way.

Mr. Stanfield: If the minister is making an honest effort and trying to get support from the principal elements in this country—I suppose it is not too conceited to think that my party is one of the principal elements in this country which should be in the picture and part of the consensus process—why is he being so secret? Above all, why is he being so slow?

An hon. Member: That is his nature. He can't help it.

Mr. Stanfield: He began talking about this, I think, in late August or very early September. Then it was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, and when we questioned him he said that it was really the Prime Minister's responsibility as far as the program was concerned, but the exploratory process would not get started until after Christmas, and that we would have a report before the end of February. Before Christmas I could not understand why we had to wait until after Christmas to get this exploratory process started.

An hon. Member: He is still on safari.

An hon. Member: It takes time to clear it through the "Group of Seven".

Mr. Stanfield: Why, in the first place, did he wait until after Christmas to begin the exploratory process? Why can the minister not bring in a report before the end of February, which he promised, unless the whole thing is just an exercise to chew up some time hoping that somehow the Americans or somebody else will bail them out or the problem will somehow disappear? But I want to say to my hon. friend through you, Madam Speaker, that if he demonstrates that he is sincere in his attempt to achieve a consensus and will give us some indication of what he is trying to do, we think the problem of fighting inflation in a manner which will not create future unemployment but rather reduce it is so important that I assure him that not only will I support him in his efforts but the members of my party will also support him.