

Income Tax Act

are so badly needed. One would expect some visible effort on the part of the government to improve the economy. Time and time again hon. members have drawn attention to the kind of provisions which are needed, but so far I find no indication that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) is even listening.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is reported in today's *Ottawa Journal* as having something in mind to improve the employment situation. I point out that it has been suggested in this House over and over again, not only by members of the opposition but by members of all parties, that this type of action is badly needed. It is comforting to learn that after all these years of great suffering by millions of people, the Prime Minister at last has something up his sleeve which might create jobs. I was glad to note this, with its indication that after years of listening to talk about an improved society and the just society, the government is at last beginning to think about it.

As a member of the opposition, I suppose if I were very selfish I would say I am glad I have had a small share in bringing this matter to the attention of the Prime Minister and that he in turn has thought sufficient of it to bring it to the attention of the press. So we have some hope, at least, of a new society—one, perhaps, where people can work and save and enjoy a decent standard of living.

The amendment should be supported. My purpose in rising is to do just that and, as I said earlier, to call the attention of the Canadian people to the fact that there have been strong pleas—again, I emphasize, from all sides of the House—that the Minister of Finance reconsider certain provisions in the bill before us if not the bill in its entirety.

It should be borne in mind that our relationship with the United States has changed since this bill first saw the light of day. In this new situation I believe the minister should revise his thinking or at least withdraw the bill for a time so he may take a second look at it. This would also enable him to pay more attention to what has been said in this House on the subject.

Many hon. members have called for the establishment of certain priorities. In light of the changed conditions which are now apparent, priorities should be fixed which would offer a solid economic course for this country to take. Most business people, most of us here in the Commons as representatives of the people, and nearly all our leading economists have advised the government and the people in general that our economic course is simply one of opportunism, of drifting aimlessly about. It must come to a halt. This type of drifting is getting the country into a terrible situation.

Here we are, a beautiful country—as someone said the other day—and certainly a rich one, abundant in both natural and human resources. There is no country in the world which is any richer, and certainly we possess the knowledge required to govern us on an even, economic course. Yet what has happened to us? The government says, and quite rightly so, that it has a mandate from the people. However, I am not sure that Canadians would be proud of those who have their mandate if they had heard some of the debate on this tax bill.

One of my purposes in speaking tonight is to call attention to what others in the House have been saying. The

[Mr. Gundlock.]

intentions of members taking part in these discussions have been good. My hon. friend from Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) spoke on this subject the other day. He drew attention to what President Nixon had to say. There is no question that President Nixon is a world leader and is a popular leader of perhaps the richest country in the world. As reported at page 8355 of *Hansard*, the President of the United States, whose words were quoted by the hon. member for Malpeque, in his address to the U.S. Congress said:

● (9:10 p.m.)

I ordered a \$4.7 billion cut in federal spending, to allow for tax cuts to create new jobs.

That is a forthright statement to the country, and judging from what has happened since then I presume his country accepted it. That statement was made on September 9. We often hear it said that our economy is so closely tied to that of the United States that we cannot control our economy. I do not agree with that premise in any way, shape or form. In the first place, I do not think we need to be tied so closely to the United States economy, particularly in view of the richness and vastness of Canada and its resources. This is why to my mind the amendment moved by my colleague from Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) to Bill C-259 should receive the support of all of us.

The President of the United States continued:

I ask the Congress to consider as its first priority, before all other business, the enactment of three tax proposals that are essential to the new prosperity. These three measures will create 500,000 new jobs in the coming year.

First, I urge the Congress to remove the 7 per cent excise tax on automobiles, so that the more than eight million people in this country who will buy new American-built cars in the next year will save an average of \$200 each. This is a sales tax, paid by the consumer. Its removal will stimulate sales, and every 100,000 additional automobiles sold will mean 25,000 additional jobs for America's workers.

The President speaks very plainly. The tax bill that we are discussing is, for all practical purposes, several years old. Since last August we are in a completely new economic ball game, yet we are being asked to consider legislation that is behind the times. The Minister of Finance is doing nothing to meet the new situation. I am aware of no change in or amendment to the bill, and no suggestion has been made by the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister that the bill will be changed in any way, shape or form. Quite frankly, I think we are in danger of getting ourselves into a worse position, though it is bad enough now.

The Prime Minister has said in this House on many occasions that Members of Parliament are not worth a hill of beans. Each member of this House represents anywhere from 25,000 to 125,000 people, and when he rises to his feet and almost begs and pleads with the government to do something to alleviate the economic situation, you cannot tell me that MPs do not amount to anything. Some of the members of this House are the hardest working bunch of people I have ever met.

I have made reference to some remarks of the hon. member for Malpeque. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) also had something to say about the economic situation in Canada. She outlined who were the people who will be affected by this measure and she made a good, honest speech on behalf of the people