

Dominion Succession Duty Act

for some amendment to the Dominion Succession Duty Act. This legislation, of course, will be somewhat on a different basis; it is called an estate tax.

Before proceeding further I want to express my complete support for the general point of view expressed by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway. He was speaking for this group in that respect. It expresses one of our attitudes towards life on these important problems relating to taxation.

I want to emphasize that we in this group have not the philosophy of bringing everyone down to a certain level. We want to bring everybody up to a certain level. When it comes to the question of estate taxes, we want to make sure that the widow is well provided for; that there is provision for the satisfactory education of the children and so on. However, at the same time we believe it is time that we increased the rate of taxation on these very large incomes. The hon. member for Okanagan Boundary made reference to some extent to a portion of the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway when he was referring to incomes in the millions—and I think he used the figure of \$5 million—as taking away, as it were, the initiative from people and not recognizing their ability. I can tell the hon. gentleman this.

I know a few people in my large experience who have a million and up to ten million, and the reason they have it largely is not as a result of any exceptional ability as compared with the average man but rather as a result of the opportunity they have had to plunder their fellow man. That is why they have this money. I am not saying that there are not many cases of people with large fortunes who have shown exceptional ability and have used them, from their point of view, to the best advantage possible under this system. But if in the days ahead, in the opinion of members of this group, we are going to solve some of these economic questions that are facing us today, and if we are going to bring about a greater, shall I say, social equality in this country, a greater fairness between all people, we must give serious consideration to such legislation as this along the lines suggested by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

Mr. Christian: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Herridge: Gladly.

Mr. Christian: Do you agree with the percentage figure mentioned by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, namely 85 per cent of the amount of an estate? Do you think that is fair? Do you not think that is plunder by government?

Mr. Herridge: That is a simple question to answer. Even with 85 per cent of \$5 million, you have quite a good deal left, have you not? You have a bit more than the average at that. I certainly agree with it. The hon. member was speaking for this group when he gave that figure.

I am just going to say this in conclusion, Mr. Chairman. If we are to develop a sense of social responsibility and also social equality, if we are to do something to meet the economic problems that face us today with respect to unemployment, and are to provide the services that are required in this country from coast to coast, we must introduce a great many other changes in legislation. We must view succession duties, taxation and estate tax according to the principles enunciated by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway when he spoke for this group on this important measure.

Mr. Hansell: I want to have something to say on this resolution by reason of the fact that many of us, a year or so ago, received many letters and petitions asking for a revision of this act in the interests of the women of this country. I especially want to call to the attention of the minister the fact that a year ago, in the last session of the last parliament, I asked the then minister of finance, Mr. Harris, whether, on the basis of this flood of letters which all members of parliament were receiving, we could expect any revision of the succession duty act to be made before the session ended. He responded that the government had been working on a revision of the act but that it would have to be deferred to the next session of parliament. Of course, since that time there has been a change. An election has been held and a new government has come into office.

But I pursued the matter a little further. A number of weeks ago, I think in November, I asked the present Minister of Finance a similar question. I prefaced my question by calling his attention to the fact that we had all received many letters and resolutions, mostly from women and women's organizations, asking for revision of the act and making certain proposals. I also reminded him of the question I had asked his predecessor. The answer the present Minister of Finance gave me at the time was that the matter was under active consideration. I want hon. members to notice that I prefaced my question by calling attention to the fact that women's organizations throughout the country were asking for certain things.

I come now to the present resolution and I say that we are reasonably pleased that there are to be changes in the present succession duty act. The name of the act is to be