

*Income Tax Act*

We have had the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in office for over ten years. He is a Francophone. We have had a party in power for ten years with about 60 seats from the province of Quebec. I forget the exact number but it is in that neighbourhood. Just consider the mess we have fallen into in respect of Ottawa and Quebec city relations during this time when we have had a Prime Minister who should have known what was happening in that province in the last ten years, and throughout the 1960's. Yet we are worse off today in so far as separatism and the dismemberment of this country is concerned than we were when the Prime Minister first came to office in 1968.

Unless the Liberal government decides very shortly that there is to be an election in the fall, and unless that party decides to select a new leader next winter to be followed by an election in the spring, this country will surely fall apart. This government must decide now to stop accusing us on this side of the House of trying to split the country, and begin addressing itself openly and frankly to the problems that exist in Quebec. Unless the government does that quickly and attempts to put an end to the bitterness that has grown among French and English speaking Canadians, this country will surely split apart.

What can this party with 15 members here do to prevent that? What can the official opposition do? The responsibility at this point clearly lies with that party on the other side of the House. Yet today we witnessed the spectacle of a minister of this Liberal government, a former dean of law and a former minister of justice, the Minister of Transport, who is minister responsible for the Wheat Board, standing in his place trying to get a rise from members on this side, and trying to make hon. members here feel guilty in a political sense for not doing our jobs in attempting to understand the people of Quebec and their feelings about Bill C-56. I am not trying to impute motives, but that is how I saw it.

This bill is badly designed and is in a state of transition at this very time when we are debating it. We do not know what is in the bill at the present time. We do not know what phone calls are being made tonight to Quebec city and to other provincial capitals. We do not know what is going on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. Is the minister seeking the floor in a point of order?

**Mr. Lang:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not sure whether the hon. member was here when I spoke, but I do want to point out to him that I was rather careful to distinguish between the Conservative party and the NDP in my remarks, and I was in no way—

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please.

**Mr. Blackburn:** Again, I am amazed, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes we transgress in this House when we confuse points of order with simple argumentative statements, but—

[Mr. Blackburn.]

**An hon. Member:** You can't blame him; he was a lousy dean of law too.

**Mr. Blackburn:** When the minister is defeated I hope no law school in this country will hire him. I think his knowledge of parliamentary procedure is somewhat lacking, and for someone like myself to have to say that—

**An hon. Member:** That is a cheap shot.

**Mr. Blackburn:** Is it a cheap shot? He is the one who precipitated it. I was simply reacting to his statement.

I do not intend to continue speaking much longer as there are others who wish to speak this evening on this bill. I am not happy with the bill. It will not create jobs and it has placed us in a constitutional wrangle, the last thing we need at this time. I am not opposed to the principle of a reduced sales tax approach to stimulate the economy. What I am opposed to is the fact that, as a result of this bill, we are further dividing the country.

I do not place all the blame at the feet of the Minister of Finance, but good heavens, he should have anticipated some of the reactions of the members of the separatist government in Quebec. There should have been more consultation instead of just phone calls to the ministers of finance of the various provinces to obtain agreement in respect of this new mechanism. There should have been anticipation of problems with the province of Quebec. If the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are unable to deal with the province of Quebec on fiscal matters, what will they do in the next election campaign? Will they make the situation even more emotional and split the country wider? Will they go into Quebec and say that they are the only ones who can keep Quebec in confederation? Will they then go to English speaking Canada and tell the people that without them Quebec will separate? Is this any way to administer the country?

Another impression I gained today when listening to the remarks of the Minister of Transport was that hon. members of the Liberal party are desperately attempting to emotionalize this controversy in the country between Quebec Francophones and the Anglophones in other parts of the country. I got the impression that they were trying to use this situation as an emotional smoke screen behind which to hide the other issues that are of greater importance, specifically the issues contained in Bill C-56. This is a very important tax bill, but in my opinion it will not stimulate the economy or create more jobs.

I thank you for the opportunity of speaking briefly this evening, Mr. Speaker, and I will now surrender the floor to the next speaker.

[Translation]

• (2152)

**Mr. Louis Duclos (Montmorency):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to take the floor before the end of this debate which has lasted too long already, to say where I stand in the dispute between Quebec and Ottawa concerning the sales tax and to place all that issue in the proper perspective.