

Income Tax

Crown, he is out of favour over there; he is so far out of favour that an auxiliary department has been set up inside the Prime Minister's office.

An hon. Member: You are playing politics.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I think it will happen again. A few days ago we heard a statement with respect to the conservation of energy, a statement which was not worthy of a high school valedictorian.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): What's wrong with our high school students?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That's exactly it. Perhaps I am being unfair to our high school students.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): The high school students in my riding are pretty bright.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I was speaking to a few of them the other day. I note the Minister of Finance is beginning to respond. I predict the same thing will happen as a result of the statement we heard the other night, the statement which was replied to so well by my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). I say that the next little cell to be formed in the Prime Minister's office will be the group of six for energy—the energy group.

Mr. Nowlan: An energy cell.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It used to be a group of seven. They used to paint with oil paint. Now they paint with another substance on their brushes. That is what is happening. They are occupying themselves now. We hear the government is operating a collegial system.

An hon. Member: Explain.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I would rather hear the Prime Minister explain what the collegial system is. I am sure the Minister of Finance is concerned about what is happening in the government and in the country, because things are running out of control, and despite his refusal to agree to controls he is a man who rather likes control. That is his "bag". That is what is happening to the country under the collegial system. The same thing is happening to the universities which also work on the collegial system; they are in trouble and this country is in trouble.

The country is in trouble because of a government which refuses to plan or to set priorities, a government which has no long-range objectives but which moves from crisis to crisis. It has come to the point at which really important problems requiring large injections of federal finance cannot be dealt with. We are still in the midst of a debate on housing. The former minister is sitting in this chamber now. There needs to be a heavy and dramatic infusion of federal funds into the housing field. But this will not come about. Instead, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) will go around with sticking-plaster, sticking on a patch here and there and subsidizing high interest rates in the process.

We hear the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) admit in his charming way—he is an engaging rogue—that

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

his department is in a mess. This was confirmed today during the question period by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald); his own department, he told us, was not in the same mess. Consider what is facing us in the field of transportation today. We have to embark on a vast program of the electrification of the railroads. We have to rebuild railroad beds. We have to extend transportation facilities between major cities. Yet as uncontrollable expenditures increase, a limit is placed upon our capacity to meet such problems. There are a number of areas in which long-range planning and heavy financing are required. Nowhere do we find the government embarking on this kind of approach. That kind of approach will have to consider all these programs from the point of view of the cost benefit Canadians will receive. This is something which is not being done.

That is why the party to which I belong is telling the government, by way of this amendment, that the process of revaluation must start right at home in the departments of government. The only way in which the government can be brought to pay attention to these matters is by our moving amendments which in effect say to the Minister of Finance, "Why ought not the people to have more money in their own pockets to spend in their own way? Why ought not the revenues of the government to be cut?"

Mr. Foster: Why ought not?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It is perfectly good English. Why not accept this amendment? The minister has a duty to the country to explain, in the course of this debate, why the Canadian people should not get a bit of their own money back. It is as simple as that. I know it is difficult for some people over there to comprehend. There is a question which will go through my mind, and through the minds of a lot of other people, if the government votes against a tax cut for Canadians. The amendment dares and defies the government to vote against a tax cut for Canadians.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Don't smile over that one.

Mr. Foster: Don't choke up so much.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I think the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) is a veterinarian. He had better stick to his veterinary medicine. I conclude by saying that we take the position that not only is it right and proper that government revenues be limited as a first step, but we believe a further tax cut would do nothing to impair the level of service that governments might wish to give. Indeed, it would be a great stimulus to the economy because it would raise the purchasing power of consumers. Thus, we think the proposition is a reasonable one. The minister has not answered the proposition. Perhaps some member on the other side will be put up to answer it, but it has not been answered to this date. We believe it is a proposition that will be welcomed by all Canadians if the government sees fit to adopt it.

● (1620)

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I should also like to lend my support to the amendment that has