

*Canada Labour Code*

● (1752)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary but his allotted time has expired.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that my two colleagues, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Olivier) and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Dupont) would leave me enough time to express my views about Bill C-223 in the name of our colleague the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). But first I would like to congratulate my two colleagues for the expertise they have shown in explaining to the House the loopholes of this bill, even its vices, shall we say, since this bill does not respond to the needs which have been really identified by the unions themselves. I trust the sound judgment of my two colleagues, in view of the great number of years they have given to trade unionism in the province of Quebec, of the role they have played in these unions and of their repeated contribution to get the government to improve the life of our workers throughout the country. I have had the privilege to witness their activities and to see the way they brought pressure to bear on the government, as is shown by the measures which my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour mentioned and by the 14 points on which the government agreed to better the life of workers. I think, Mr. Speaker, that these measures are positive and valuable and that they will contribute to improve the future of workers.

But I cannot understand how Bill C-223 might improve the life of those who are already unionized. If we have only 35 or 40 per cent of workers holding a union card compared to—I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Nickel Belt is going to let me finish—compared to the workers in Denmark, France, Germany, Austria and in other countries which he mentioned, there might be some reasons for that. It may be that trade unionism in those countries is not cut off from authority but rather that unions work with the established powers, without being militant to the extent of seeking to break the system and create fear and apprehension among employers. And this negative trade unionism, which unfortunately is a little too common in our country, may contribute to keep away the investments that are so much needed, especially in the province of Quebec. I cannot see, Mr. Speaker, how such a measure could help create jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. It being six o'clock, the hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

[Mr. Olivier.]

● (2002)

## AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## INCOME TAX ACT

## MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Chrétien that Bill C-56, to amend the statute law relating to income tax and to authorize payments related to provincial sales tax reductions, be read the second time and referred to the committee of the whole, and the amendment of Mr. Broadbent (p. 5548).

**Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be very brief and make a few remarks about one of the issues which is constantly raised in connection with the Income Tax Act and with budgets when they come up, namely, the allegation largely made by the business community, and small business in particular, that there are not enough incentives provided in the Canadian system to encourage business and investment. I want to make the point, giving some very specific examples, that there are indeed a tremendous number of very warm and very attractive incentives in our income tax system which at least compare with the incentives in the American system.

Before I come to them, it is worth making the point, because it is sometimes overlooked, that the purpose of the tax system is to raise revenue for public purposes. When it comes to raising tax revenue, it has to be borne in mind by everybody that the only place where we can raise taxes in this society is from those people and corporations that have the means. It should not be surprising that taxes are levied on those with means. One of the things we can take particular pride in in this country, and that I believe all Canadians do, is that we have a progressive system of income tax; that is, the higher your income is, the more taxes you pay.

The Income Tax Act contains a schedule with rates in it. Those rates can be somewhat misleading because they do not take into account the various deductions, exemptions and tax credits that are available. A recent analysis done on the subject by the Canadian Tax Foundation showed that even taking into consideration all those various benefits—the exemptions, deductions and credits—the Canadian tax system is still a progressive one. I sometimes think when we are being urged to consider a greater variety of so-called incentives that those who put forward the various proposals are tending to forget the importance in a democratic society of maintaining the “progressivity” of the income tax system.