

Income Tax Act and Related Acts

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Canadians are intitled to fiscal fairness. They did not get it from the Progressive Conservative Government. I ask all Members here in the House to support our subamendment which calls for a measure of fairness by imposing a minimum tax on corporations. It exists in the United States, even under President Ronald Reagan. I don't see why it could not exist here, to ensure that we have a fair system and to make sure that all corporations that are making a profit pay taxes every year.

That is our amendment, Mr. Speaker. It is part of our campaign for fiscal fairness and for a government that is honest and fair to its citizens.

[English]

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have had an opportunity to pose questions, but I understand that that is not possible right now. I want to focus on the NDP amendment, which is an amendment to the Liberals' amendment. Today we have taken some time in the House to point out the inadequacies of the Government's policy on taxation and the unfairness of the Government's approach to taxation. It is not surprising that the Liberals would be able to come up with an amendment that appears to make sense.

The Liberals are basically saying that this House opposes in principle the taxation measures of the Government because the Bill seeks to impose a tax system that first is lacking in progressivity. What is that? Progressivity simply means that those who earn little pay little in taxes and those who earn a lot would be expected to pay a lot in taxes. It means that those who can afford to pay ought to be able to pay. It is a great principle.

Second, the Liberals say that the tax system places unfair burdens on families. That is true and it ought to be stated. Third, the Liberals state that the tax system unjustly taxes middle-income earners. That as well is true, and I spoke earlier today about the very heavy tax burden that has been placed on the middle-income earners of Canada.

Fourth, the Liberals say that the new tax system is more complex than the one presently in place. Anyone who had to fill out a tax form or who had to hire someone to fill out a tax form knows that the taxation system is very complex. There is a need for simplicity as long as that simplicity leads to greater justice in the tax system.

The fifth and sixth points made by the Liberal Party are the ones that I find interesting. The Liberals say that the new tax system discourages capital formation and reduces the competitiveness of Canadian corporations. Obviously we need capital in order to have economic growth, and our firms must be competitive, so those are good points. However, that is where the Liberals stopped. Therefore, we moved an amendment adding that we oppose the Bill because the Bill fails to ensure

that corporations make a fair and regular contribution to federal tax revenues by imposing a minimum corporate tax.

• (1910)

We seek to complete the circle. The Liberals have indicated they are in favour of those things that will help people, such as a progressive tax system, because the burden is unjustly laid upon middle income earners. They make that point but fail to explain how the revenue loss will be made up. When they deal with the corporate side of the ledger, they deal only with the need of corporations to be competitive and a necessity for the tax system to recognize that fact. They fail to deal with the other side of the ledger, which is that if we are to relieve the tax burden on ordinary families, as they suggest in their motion, then we have to find the revenue some place.

We in this Party believe in putting the whole picture before Canadians. The place to find that revenue is from those corporations which are making profits but not now paying taxes. I understand there are some 60,000 of them. Our amendment points out that if we are to have a just tax system, if we are to give some relief to ordinary Canadian families, it will have to come from those who now get away without paying any taxes.

The Liberals fail to recognize the problem and fail to provide the solution. They criticize the Government, which is a necessary part of being in opposition, but if you want to change the situation, you must have a solution to the problems. The Liberal motion does not do that.

That is why, when I spoke earlier today, I indicated that when Canadians look for an alternative to the tax policies they have experienced over the last four years and they look to the Liberal Party, they are looking in the wrong place and they will inevitably be disillusioned.

That is why we moved this motion. The amendment introduced by the Liberal Party was only a half measure. It was like trying to take a step by lifting up your foot and forgetting to put it down again. They have identified the problem but failed to outline the solution.

We think that problems should not only be identified, they should be solved. We think what is needed is not just a change in government but a change in direction. What is needed is not only a capacity to analyse the injustices in society, but a capacity to take the action necessary to solve those injustices and bring about a better community for all Canadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on the subamendment (Mr. Murphy).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: No.