

Income Tax

though we are catering to the legitimate wish of everyone to lower the tax burden. But you cannot have it both ways. You cannot lower tax burdens and also increase services to the public. You have to deal with both problems.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) said some very fine things. However, I was a bit disappointed when he stated that the government was attempting to discourage home ownership. I thought that was very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. I do not know whether he really meant that. I do not see how anyone can seriously say the government is attempting to discourage home ownership when only two weeks ago in this House the minister responsible for housing introduced a budget for CMHC which increased its funds by \$200 million. In this inflationary period, I think the government is doing its best to shift priority to housing, and within that area is attempting to shift priorities from general housing programs to public housing programs.

When a government is dealing with limited amounts of money its real problem is to allocate that money according to proper priorities. We cannot go on suggesting that exemptions be given in many, many areas, which might all be laudable, if we are not also prepared at the same time to suggest methods of making up the losses in revenue.

As I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, I think we should implement measures to assist the Canadian people with their housing, but I think that those measures should be implemented through the National Housing Act and not through the Income Tax Act. However, I would support this motion since it only states that the government should give consideration to the proposals contained in it. Perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps the doubts I have raised in this debate are without foundation. Perhaps we can help those on low income by proposing amendments to the Income Tax Act to allow them exemptions such as are suggested here. But while I support the motion, I have a feeling that its adoption would do more to help those who have larger incomes, who have larger homes, and would not really help those who are having difficulty either purchasing their own homes or paying the high rentals in effect today.

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record as saying that perhaps in my enthusiasm, listening to the hon. member when he began his remarks, I

jumped to an unwarranted conclusion and threw in an "Oh, oh." I would like to withdraw that "Oh, oh" because I see that he is in favour of the motion, with certain misgivings.

Mr. Skoberg: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, would the House allow the hon. member who introduced the motion to clarify the \$500 each year, whether it is deducted from the taxable income or the tax?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am afraid that option is not open to us at this stage.

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, of late I seem to be on my feet quite often congratulating Liberal members—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bigg: Wait for the break—for taking a personal stand which is often at some variance with the stand taken by the government. Some years ago I suggested it might be a good idea if we had an all-party caucus once a month and cleared some of the items which come up from time to time upon which there is little difference of opinion between well-meaning members of Parliament. I think this is one of those items.

There is hardly a person who does not know that the Canadian homeowner is carrying a terrible burden of double taxation. I know the argument that we have to look after the deep pocket. That is a fine argument in a socialist minded country, but it is not the only answer. There is some such thing as equity. Just because a person has made a few honest dollars I do not think governments at any level, municipal, provincial or federal, have any God given right to take all that money.

Half of the letters I get these days are about taxes. I would say that every third letter I get concerns the high taxes on private property. I am glad to see that this motion proposed by the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) comes right to the point, and covers both home owners and those who rent their accommodation. Rents are exorbitantly high for the middle and lower income Canadian, who is told by his landlord that he, the landlord, faces a crushing burden of taxation. For this reason I wholeheartedly support the motion. I would not be consistent if I did not, because during every budget debate in the last 12 years I have mentioned the crushing burden of double taxation.

We often make comparisons with the situation in the country to the south of us. In the