

Income Tax Act

think that is the complete name of his constituency. I know it is a large one. He is talking about the promise we have not kept. I thought he would remind the House about all the promises we made concerning agriculture, every one of which we kept except the one he is talking about. The Hon. Member could have mentioned the other seven we did keep. We intend to keep that promise. It is not too late yet, as the Hon. Member knows full well.

We made that promise after a study, after consultation and that type of thing. If the Hon. Member remembers, we passed laws in this House providing that a farm could be transferred tax-free to a son or daughter who were actively farming. That has been interpreted, changed by regulation and so on, to mean that those farms are taxed after the valuation date and I have an interest in that. I believe that is a circumvention, actually, that regulation, of the intent of Parliament regarding transferring those farms. I was reading the other day the speeches which I made at the time we made those changes, and the speeches which other Hon. Members made. We are investigating this matter at the present time. I will say that we were the only nation in the world which allowed that at the time. The United States did not dare do it. But we feel there is nothing more important in the world than food production.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleague in raising some questions about the appropriateness of the direction the Government is taking. I am always amused when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) rises to tell us how he just spent two or three hours reading his own speeches. It is interesting reading, no doubt.

Mr. Whelan: You would be a very wise man if you read them also.

Mr. Deans: As my colleague the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) says, "He must be a bit of a masochist".

Mr. Whelan: A bit of a what?

Mr. Deans: I would like to spend a few moments speaking about the Government's general direction, Mr. Speaker. I have become increasingly more concerned over the last few years with the way governments have moved—not only this Government but many governments—toward using income earners' taxes as a basis for subsidizing the so-called free enterprise sector. It seems to me, back over the years, that the free enterprisers of the world—and there are few left—believe that they should get government off their backs, that if they could just be left to do their own thing, they would take their chances. If they succeeded, that would be fine; if they did not, then they themselves would assume the responsibility.

In the last few years I have seen a dramatic shift which has brought many people to the door of the Government asking for additional assistance, sometimes in the form of direct handouts and on other occasions in the form of loan guarantees, the purpose of which is to attempt to guarantee the incomes of shareholders of those major corporations—and in the main it

is the major corporations which show up—or an attempt to try to guarantee the investment of some of the smaller investors in less major corporations. This is done at the expense of the individual taxpayer who is asked to contribute more heavily to the tax coffers of the country in order that the Government will have available to it moneys to hand out to other people to secure their investments.

● (1240)

We do not afford individual taxpayers that same kind of protection, the benefits of which are now and have been over the last two years made available to major private corporations. I look back over the course of the last year or year and a half and think of the countless numbers of families who found themselves unable to meet their mortgage commitments because the Government, together with the Bank of Canada, made decisions which would allow interest rates to rise far beyond what most people would have accepted as being reasonable. Those people came to the Government and said they were losing their investment, that they could not afford to make the payments which are in many ways the direct consequence of government policy. The Government said: "Isn't that very, very tough; we really would like to help". But no help was forthcoming.

However, those same people in that same year were required to contribute, through their income taxes, to loan guarantees for major corporations and to direct subsidies to less major corporations all across the country. The purpose of that particular exercise was to secure the investment of investors in those corporations.

Mr. Evans: Not to mention save jobs.

Mr. Deans: The question really is, however, did it save jobs?

Mr. Evans: Yes.

Mr. Deans: Is that the appropriate way to secure those jobs? Is it right to continue to overtax average working families in order to save a few jobs, rather than reducing the tax burden on those self-same families to enable them to enter the marketplace and increase the demand for goods?

Mr. Fisher: This sounds like Reagan's 1980 platform.

Mr. Deans: To increase demand, improve the competitive position of the various corporations in that way rather than the way the Government has chosen? Not in isolation, I admit.

Mr. Evans: You just made my case for me.

Mr. Deans: I would argue, as I have all along and as I have been joined, belatedly, by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans), that it makes more sense to reduce the burden of taxation on the average Canadian family and allow them to purchase the products made by Canadians which would ultimately result in Canadians going back to work—

Mr. Evans: Excellent argument.