

Income Tax Act

a much greater degree than the proposed measure. And, I suggest, Mr. Chairman, at infinitely less cost.

What are we really talking about? If my hon. friend from Edmonton West is really concerned about helping small businessmen, those who are trying to get started and those for whom he feels strongly—and I am sure he does—why does he not suggest measures such as an expansion of the small businessman's loans and depreciation allowances in the first years in business? After all, they are willing to do this for the large mining corporations. We give them a three-year tax holiday? They are willing to do it for the oil companies, but where is it for the small businessman?

This is something Carter recommended. There are many ways, I know from experience, in which small businessmen can be assisted. The idea of giving them tax benefits after they have made up to \$50,000 profit is laughable. If you want to give them a tax benefit on the Mandeville fable, or the trickle-down theory, if you want to use eighteenth century economics, fine—and by the look of this bill, this is what we are doing. But if there is any genuine concern for helping the little man get off the ground and giving him help when he needs it, then this legislation is not the way to do it and it cannot be justified on those terms.

I ask hon. members to consider what I have said because the hon. member for Edmonton West—and perhaps some of his colleagues feel as he does—thinks our opposition to the \$400 million give-away is opposition to assisting business. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are very anxious to assist business, and small business in particular. If a business is profitable, it has less claim to my sympathy or to my tears. Any kind of tax on business is probably going too far so far as the Conservative party is concerned. I see that the Conservative party is very envious of the Liberal party's ability to open the purse-strings of business and are hoping that they might have a nice little poke at that bag themselves. This is understandable.

We are not so blessed. Those purse-strings remain tightly closed to us. The unions do not get these tax free allowances. I hope there will be debate along the lines I am suggesting, and that we turn our thoughts to more significant ways of helping small business in this country instead of blathering about giving additional rewards to those who are already making significant profits and do not have to show that they are prepared to use those profits for the needs of their business, for providing employment or for the benefit of the country.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Chairman, better it should be my day in the House today to point out some of the deficiencies in the legislation, than that the House be deemed to have looked at these things and just dismissed them or passed them very cavalierly. I hear from the background something about a concept in economics. That hon. member's economics would not get him out of the woodwork in a service station, if we were to apply them. I should like to see him run a business.

• (9:40 p.m.)

In any event, a number of able briefs have been presented to the government. Unfortunately, this type of opera-

tion in committee of the whole prevents any hon. member discussing these briefs with government officials or even with ministers. We have had a succession of parliamentary secretaries who have been taking turns at doing House duty. As we say in French—

[*Translation*]

Silent as the grave.

[*English*]

They give no information. The only one who has been able to speak at any time is the hon. member for Calgary South, and he has done more to alienate certain personalities in the opposition than contribute to the efficacy of the debate. Certainly he has not contributed to any greater knowledge.

Some excellent briefs were put forward to the government by the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, a number of major chartered accountants firms, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, mining associations and a number of other business organizations. They represent large and small interests. But if there is such a thing as an amalgam of small businesses or individuals, such as the Canadian Congress of Labour, and if it wanted to get off its collective stern and get something down on paper where it would be of some benefit to its membership, it would be discharging its responsibilities instead of abdicating them.

Those bodies exist for the purpose of advancing the interests of their members and it is a good thing that some of them do. If one relied upon the silence that we get from certain quarters, one could pass any type of petition. I am sure the hon. member to my left would like to sign one that advocated his own hanging.

In the brief of the Canadian Bar Association there is one observation which should go on record—and may I say that in its approach the Canadian Bar is not unfriendly to some of the spirit of the legislation, particularly in this section. I do not quite agree with all it says, but they point out some of the inconsistencies. Here, again, is something that is not included in the 150-odd amendments that have been brought forward. I think the Minister of Justice should lay the whip to some of his draftsmen again. He had them under the gun all spring and summer to produce Bill C-259. In any event, the following statement is made in the brief:

Basically, it is hoped to clear out the 1971 undistributed income on hand and the 1971 capital surplus before the earnings or gains under the new system are distributed.

I suppose that various Ministers of Finance have dreamed of what they claimed to be vast reserves hidden somewhere under layers of corporate camouflage. But financing has been so difficult that I am surprised that any Minister of Justice or any of his advisers should continue to be under the illusion that so much money was hidden when people were desperate for money. I remember when years and years ago they said that Canada had billions and billions of bushels of wheat, but somebody had lost sight of the fact that a good number of people had been able to dispose quietly of their stocks. They were not going to let government regulations stand in their way of liquidation. The same thing happens here. The brief continues:

Once these historical anomalies are cleared up, the system should