

Income Tax

I think it is commonly said that our taxation system is destroying our work ethic. I think this is true of a good many people who are trying to earn a decent living. When you travel throughout the large cities and small towns of this country you sometimes wonder why people do work, with the taxation system we have at the present time.

● (1640)

If we have the money, and I believe we do, we should give some of it back to the Canadian people as a stimulus. If this were to occur we could look to stimulating the economy; we could look to restrained government spending, because government would be far more aware of the amount of money available. Such a step would be anti-inflationary. The reduction would be reflected, in terms of most individual taxpayers, in a saving of somewhere between \$50 and \$300 for every person in Canada, with this kind of tax break. It is certainly logical at this time, for the reasons I have given.

I hope the Minister of Finance will seriously consider this suggestion, which I think would receive speedy passage by all parties in this House. If such a tax measure were introduced, it would certainly help the Canadian people, and they deserve to be helped.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, Bill C-49 is tantamount to some kind of a tax reform: it reduces or increases someone's tax burden, and tries to help someone else. It amounts to changing money from one pocket to another.

In 1865, Madam Speaker, President Abraham Lincoln, probably the greatest president in the entire history of the United States, delivered a speech on the occasion of the Civil War which pitted the North against the South. If I quote from Abraham Lincoln's speech, it is because everybody here is talking about government spending and the need to reduce it to the bare minimum, in spite of the fact that this might entail an increase in unemployment, a slow down in the building industry or in the development of our economic and natural resources. Many hon. members, especially within the Progressive Conservative Party, are eager to see the government reduce their spending, even if this would mean delaying progress in Canada. That is why I wish to quote the following from Abraham Lincoln's speech:

[English]

I have two great enemies—the southern army in front of me, and the financial institutions in the rear. Of the two, the one behind is my greatest foe.

[Translation]

This is a President of the United States speaking. How I wish I had heard the Leader of the Opposition say something like that!

[English]

The government should create, issue and circulate all the currency required to satisfy the spending power of the government and the buying power of consumers.

[Translation]

President Lincoln was not a fool, Madam Speaker, and he was concerned not with the army and the guns that he had facing him, but with the financiers behind him who

would not put up with the decisions of his government. I continue on:

[English]

The privilege of creating and issuing money is not only the supreme prerogative of government, it is the government's greatest creative opportunity. The people can and will be furnished with a currency as safe as their own country. Money will cease to be master and become the servant of the people. Democracy will rise superior to the money power.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, Lincoln was right at that time, and he was criticized for having had green backs printed to finance food and clothing supplies for the Northern armies. Is it not a fact that it was with those green backs that he won the war? In a moment, we shall be listening to the hon. minister, who has just come in, speaking about fiscal, financial and other matters, all related to the development of oil resources in Alberta. The problem is a monetary one, not a problem of oil sands, of manpower, of physical or intellectual capacity, it is a monetary problem. There is no money.

Madam Speaker, one object of the new fiscal system is even to reduce taxes in one sector to increase them in another. At the same time, we hear speeches about inflation, about the prices that are too high because there are shortages.

The Minister of Agriculture is not here this afternoon. He is the one who told the farmers yesterday, as it was reported in the newspapers: You are overproducing. There is an oversupply of foodstuff. This is why there are people starving in Montreal, in smaller communities, and this is why others have almost reached the point of starvation in the Gaspé peninsula and the riding of Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine—

Mr. Béchard: That is not so!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —with pittance cheques of \$145 a month, in Bonaventure proper—

Mr. Béchard: No, not in Bonaventure.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): —in Gaspé, it is all the same.

Mr. Béchard: You are insulting the people of Gaspé.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): No, I am not. It is the system that you keep on supporting in this House that I blame, not the people of your area. But I blame the representative of that area, however, because he is not doing his duty.

Mr. Béchard: I thank the hon. member. The representative of Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine does not disappear for months at a time, though.

● (1650)

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): This is probably none of the business of the member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. If he wants to know why I am not here, I can inform him.

Mr. Béchard: That is none of your business either.