

Income Tax Act, 1986

parts of the country, not just the gulf that is certainly getting larger between rich and poor under this administration?

• (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Fontaine: The Hon. Member for York-West (Mr. Marchi), as usual, and like his colleagues, is going to dwell on details as he does every day, during Question Period for instance, anxious as he is to have Canadians forget we created 430,000 jobs. During the Summer of 1984, Canadians understood our message on a balanced budget. This is what we are giving them today, Mr. Speaker. So they understood our message and now they are thanking us. They are telling us: "Carry on, you are doing well". We have the support of people who know about the economy, people like you, people in Chambers of Commerce, businessmen's organizations, economists, consumers in general, business people who trust us, who invest, who have hired 430,000 people. That is our message, Mr. Speaker, and that is our performance. Therefore, I do not have to answer questions about details that they keep asking to victimize this Government.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior (Mr. Penner).

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, I did my best to try to follow the arguments of the Hon. Member from Lévis (Mr. Fontaine). I suspect that perhaps what he was trying to do today was to launch a new school of economic thought. If that is the case, I would suggest to him that, other than himself, I doubt that anyone else would be interested in enrolment.

I have spent some time on Bill C-84 and done some analysis of it. I have come to one inescapable conclusion, and that is that Bill C-84 takes what has been in this country a snail's pace movement towards tax reform and it has slammed that into reverse.

When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) introduced his Budget on May 23 he told the House of Commons that this Budget was going to be tough and it was going to be fair. I have to agree that this Budget is tough. It certainly is very tough on lower income Canadians and on middle-income Canadians. Members who support the Government must be feeling a little awkward, a little uncertain of themselves when they contemplate the figures that were mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and repeated by the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) that a man or a woman earning \$15,000 is going to face, over the next four years, a cumulative tax increase of 36 per cent. To earn \$15,000 is to have a person hovering around the poverty line. To face an increase like that is very, very difficult for Hon. Members to justify. So it is a tough Budget, it is tough on lower and middle-income Canadians, and it does provide some

nice fat, juicy fare for the well-to-do. I will come back to that a little later on.

I do want to give the Minister of Finance some credit. The Minister of Finance must be given some credit for assisting his Party and assisting his Government to slip so significantly in the public opinion polls. Now he cannot take all the credit, he is getting some help from his colleagues in the Cabinet, and he is certainly getting quite a bit of help from his Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

During the recess of Parliament when I was in my constituency I spoke to a citizen for whom I have great respect and he made an interesting comment. He said, "You know, I am not a person who has studied political science or even economics". He was in another important field of endeavour, but he said, "It occurred to me that if I were the Minister of Finance and I were preparing a Budget for the nation, I would certainly not attack or move against either senior citizens or children".

You know that the senior citizens of this country fought back and they won, and no more needs to be said about that except that there is a lingering suspicion in the minds of many Canadians, because of that error made by the Minister of Finance, that the Conservative Party that now forms the Government wants to erode the social security system that has been built up over a long period of time. Even though the senior citizens did win their battle, the children of this country continue to be the losers. Thanks to the family allowance measure that went through the House yesterday, children are going to get an additional one cent a day in 1986. I want to say that they will get one cent a day, but if those same children were to buy one or two confectionery items then this Government is going to reach into the blue jeans of those tykes and take out all of the loose change.

An Hon. Member: The dentists think it is wonderful.

Mr. Penner: Surely the Conservative Party is not now going to dictate what people shall eat or what they shall buy. Surely the Member who has just spoken is not saying that in this measure the Government wants to move against the confectionery industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On a point of order, the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Gormley).

Mr. Gormley: I have been listening with great interest to this Member. I heard him refer to Bill C-70, I heard him refer to other ways, means and motions. I am wondering if he is going to come to the point and discuss Bill C-84 at some point before his time expires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I know the Hon. Member, he is a colleague of mine from the class of '68. I know that he knows what relevancy is in this House. I am sure he is getting to the point.