

The Address—Mr. Irvine

believe this was mentioned yesterday by one hon. Member. I think this is a very important matter because it is of great interest to those people who do not have quite as much as people who have a higher income. I am wondering if there is going to be a change announced in this regard perhaps a little later. Will this be held out and dangled in front of the electorate as a political plum? But this is a most ridiculous tax structure, when you stop to figure that a single girl or a single man pays tax on every cent he or she makes in addition to \$21 per week; when you consider that a man may have to look after a family, as a married man, and pay tax on everything that he makes over \$41 per week. Surely these people are entitled to an absolute minimum of \$60 per week, in order that in this land of plenty they may live with a certain amount of dignity.

I would say, Sir, that these figures are old fashioned; they are antiquated, and were arrived at or accepted at a time when the value of the dollar was a great deal more than it is today. I think this is one of the lowest exemption foundations in the entire world. It is, I say again, unjust; it is unrealistic, and I would like to know when something is going to be done about it. I would also like to suggest that this exemption be raised for single people to \$2,000 and for married people to \$3,000. This would give them an opportunity to get a little bit ahead, that they might own their own homes and be good, respectable citizens of their respective communities.

I received a letter recently from the City Council of the City of London; the original was sent to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and a copy was sent to me as the Member for that city. For the benefit of those who are not acquainted with it, I would like to inform the House that the City of London is the finest city in the world, and certainly has the finest people in the world—or else I would not be here.

I am going to quote, if I may, just the main, meaty part of this resolution, which goes like this:

Therefore be it resolved that the Federal Government be petitioned to amend the Income Tax Act to allow all municipal property taxes levied against owner-occupied residential property to be claimed as a deductible expense when filing income tax returns.

That is signed by the City Clerk of the City of London and was moved, seconded and accepted by the City Council. This, to me, Sir, seems to be a very sensible approach. Some years ago even Joseph Stalin said in

one of his addresses that individual home ownership and individual enterprise makes it very difficult for Communism to make much headway or to gain much of a foothold on the North American continent.

• (4:30 p.m.)

This brings me back to an old pet subject of mine: What are we doing to assist the small businessman? I see nothing at all in the Throne Speech which will be of very great assistance to him. Certainly I hope there will be something in the Budget. The small operator gets smaller; the big operator gets bigger. As I said a moment ago, these people actually are, or should be, the backbone of our very democratic society.

Then, of course, these people are loaded down with all kinds of administrative duties, and many of them do not have sufficient help to look after these little details. They are things which cost them money and for which they get no compensation at all. First of all they have to make the deduction for unemployment insurance. They have to make the deduction for income tax. In some instances they have to make the deduction for the 11 per cent sales tax. Now starting in January 1966 the deduction will have to be made for the Canada Pension Plan payment. In many cases these firms are small with perhaps only 10, 15 or 20 employees; but out of their own treasury they have to hire an extra man to look after these details. If they are late in filing some of these returns they are fined. If they underpay through an honest error, they are fined for that. If they overpay, then eventually they are repaid, but with no interest. That is one of the strange things about these payments; it seems to me to be a one-way street.

I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the deductions they will have to make under the Canada Pension Plan. I should like to make it clear, in the first instance, that I am very much in favour of a Canada Pension Plan, and let us say that the one we have set up is a good step in the right direction. But we must think of those not covered by the plan. Let us for a moment take the word "contributor" and analyse it. A contribution, to my way of thinking, is something you give voluntarily. This is not a contribution; this is something you must give, and therefore it becomes a tax. Then farther on in the Bill we find the words "in order that all people might live in dignity". Now, Mr. Speaker, not all people can do that because not all people are covered by the plan. How can a man making \$3,000 a year live in dignity when,