

Income Tax Act

have been your position? Mr. Chairman, I do not have to answer for that member, but as a responsible representative I have to answer as a responsible man. I must say that if the same procedure had been applied toward any of the other provinces of my country, I would also adopt the same position as the one I am taking today because we live in the same country, with the same principles, the same responsibilities and I feel quite disappointed today after these two months of debate for we have been discussing that for two months in this House and we have taken strong stands so that the constitution will be respected, so that we can live together in harmony. Today after reading the letter of the finance minister of Quebec which I have read carefully and reread and perhaps not understood completely, though I am willing to read it again, I think we should do our utmost to try to understand it well so that all of us 264 members of the House can adopt a position which will be the one likely to lead us to prosperity in this country and give equal chances to every province. Mr. Chairman, we have been witness to the fact that the province of Alberta, which does not have a retail sales tax and I now see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) listening to me carefully, it will still be getting something from the federal government.

Mr. Chrétien: No.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): No? Well, I would like to be corrected then. Will the province of Alberta not be getting a few million dollars—

Mr. Chrétien: No!

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): —to allow. Here, according to—the Minister of Finance shakes his head. All the more reason for saying that not many in this House understand the thinking of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister. About two weeks ago, the Minister of Finance—

Mr. Chrétien: I have been saying for two months that we are not paying Alberta!

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): —the following happened, and please correct me, because it is time to take honest stands. For me, if I have to back out, I say to the Minister of Finance that I will do so—

Mr. Chrétien: It will depend on the questions!

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): —in all honesty in order to serve my country well.

If the Minister of Finance has to do the same thing I hope he will be honest enough to do it to serve this country well because in the final analysis we are at a climax. We now have a crucial problem—

Mr. Chrétien: It is solved—read the letter.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance tells me it is solved. He says, read the letter. In the first paragraph—I see the Minister of Finance telling me to read the letter. I am pleased that the Minister of Finance should refer to me as *tu*. We do it for the Holy Father, so why not for a simple member of parliament?

In the first paragraph, the minister of finance of Quebec says, and I quote:

... our governments disagree ... and that it would be useless to seek a formula other than the one which was approved by the Quebec government and supported unanimously by the National Assembly.

That is in the first paragraph. Moving to the second paragraph, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chrétien: But the problem is solved.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): You can be sure, Mr. Minister of Finance, that if you can convince us that the problem is solved I am going to applaud like mad with my two big hands—you can be sure of that!

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, if I could urge the hon. member to read the letter where he says at the end of the second paragraph on page 2, and I quote:

In this regard, I would like to submit to you a three-part proposal which includes the various elements of solution suggested in recent weeks.

First, there is the \$40 million that I mentioned at the beginning for which the government of Quebec qualified. The second paragraph deals with Bill C-56 in which we propose to reduce immediately the income tax of Quebec taxpayers by \$85. That is clause 30(b) of the bill now before us. If we could vote tonight on clause 30(b), we would thus accept Mr. Parizeau's first proposal. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to see the hon. member for Bellechasse getting all set to applaud.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Let us not go too fast, do not ask for anything before I have understood everything clearly. I am not the only one who has not quite understood the policy of the Minister of Finance since April 10. If I were, I would bow out, but I am not the only one: many other hon. members did not either, nor did quite a number of editors who wrote whole pages on the matter and have kept asking questions of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

An hon. Member: Do not forget Claude Ryan.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Chairman, I should like to come back—

Mr. Nystrom: Do not forget the Gallup poll.