

Income Tax Act

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie), in the House for what is probably the final stage of this bill which, as one of his colleagues just indicated, has been dealt with expeditiously and with co-operation on all sides. This is probably contrary to the expectation of the Minister of Finance as he indicated the other day, I think before he had even tabled the bill although I am not quite sure of that, that he could not get to his budget because of the obstructionist tactics of the opposition which were holding up this bill so he could not get on with what will be the cutting of the umbilical cord, we hope, sooner or later, when they begin to take over the responsibilities they officially assumed on June 4.

We have tried to recognize the decision of the electorate on May 22. We let this new crowd have five, beautiful, quiet undisturbed months in the backrooms of Ottawa to find out where the private bathrooms were, where the paper clips were, which was was up, and so forth. Of course for some years before this they had indicated that they had all the answers and were just waiting to take Canada into the Valhalla of Conservative glory and prosperity, and all that sort of thing.

I note with some whimsy the furrowed brows and prison pallor that is descending upon my good friends across the way as they take on their responsibilities and find that there are no simple answers to all these things. I respect that, Mr. Speaker, because it is the truth. There are no simple answers to the problems we face in this country or around the world. They are human, I guess.

Mr. Knowles: Don't be too sure.

Mr. Andras: Wait for it, Stanley; wait for it. One could forgive the puzzlement and fevered brows that one sees now as they weave and dodge in their answers to this House. One cannot forgive or take lightly, however, the hypocrisy with which they approach their task. I do not know how long they can continue to try to do this, especially since they are always trying to say they cannot move because of what they inherited.

We have been trying to draw out our hon. friend from down east into a frank, open, and honest admission such as he has been capable of in some other circumstances. I could probably search through *Hansard* and find one or two times when he may have been absolutely straightforward in his comments. We have been trying to smoke him out, as it were, to say, "Okay, we have the responsibility now. We won the election. We will take that responsibility and get on with it." That has not been the case, Mr. Speaker.

These are the tax motions of the previous budget of the previous government. The election was in May; it is now November. Perhaps they were justified in taking so long—the longest period in the history of the Canadian Parliament—to get their act together before they called Parliament. Perhaps they were justified because they had not had much experience at the job.

They cannot have it both ways, however. They cannot sit here day after day saying that we on this side are causing the

delay in getting this bill through and that, in turn, the Minister of Finance is delayed in getting his own budget measures before the House and the country. We could pass this in a couple of days; we would have passed it in June and we would have passed it in July, so there is no problem about that. There is some other problem here as there is with a lot of the things they are doing or not doing.

Before the election, they sat on this side of the House and put alleged facts and figures on the record. It is most amusing and interesting to read through the *Hansards* and see what was said by my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, by my hon. friend, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens), and by that real guru of economics in the Conservative government who is going back to York University or Toronto University or somewhere, or maybe they have something else in mind for him, Mr. Gillies, and, of course, that absolute expert on economic affairs, who is now the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark).

It is interesting to see what they said then and what they are doing now. It is also interesting to recognize that they made statements during the election campaign such as the one that the cash or borrowing requirements in this fiscal year would be as high as \$17 billion—a nice round figure. There were other guesses of 13, 14, 15, 16—take your choice. I even heard it expressed as \$18 billion once. That is on the record.

Their forecasts of unemployment were in the double digits, 10 per cent or so, and their forecasts on inflation were double digit. In other words, the skies were going to fall down as a result of the policies of the previous government.

They still have not brought their act together since the election, even with five months of perusing all those facts and figures, and they have gone on public record as indicating that the cash deficits of the government are lower than we had forecast. They are certainly lower than they had forecast. Yet, Mr. Speaker, and this is the point of hypocrisy that I want to establish, they had forecast the cash requirements in borrowing not only for this fiscal year but they ventured into future years as well, and those figures are on the record in *Hansard* and in outside speeches. Those were the figures that they forecast. They were much higher than actually turned out to be the case. It was on those higher forecasts that they peddled themselves across this country, it was on the basis of those forecasts that they went out and made promises of a \$2 billion tax reduction across the board. It was on those much higher expenditure forecasts that they quoted, and presumably believe in, that they went out and made promises about mortgage deductibility which, at maturity, is going to cost about \$2.5 billion per year. It was on those higher expenditure forecasts that they made all sorts of promises. Some say they would cost \$5 billion per year and some say the cost would be \$7 billion per year.

According to the Prime Minister, that stimulative deficit was going to take two months, and according to the President of the Treasury Board it is going to take one year, but according to the Minister of Finance it would take two years to stimulate in and out and disappear—the disappearing deficit.