

efficiently and of higher quality than ever before, and given that the Government cut the \$4.4 billion with the intention of creating as little difficulty as possible, how can the Minister justify the very major reduction in the expenditures of the federal Government for agricultural research, which amounts to several million dollars, just at a time when, according to experts in the field, other countries are doing very much more than Canada in the way of research?

**Mr. Mayer:** Again, I would like to put some facts on the record. If the Hon. Member would like to refer to some of the statements made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), he would see that there was an over-all reduction in expenditure by the Department of Agriculture, some of it achieved by genuine reduction and some of it achieved by a fee for service. However, in terms of the reduction in the amount for agricultural research, there was absolutely none.

I agree totally with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North that we must do more research. We are behind in many areas of research because of the lack of emphasis put on research by the previous Government, especially in agriculture. That is very sad because the Department of Agriculture in the past, and I believe still to a large degree, has very much of a world-wide reputation for research. Unfortunately, it was not kept up. I will tell the Hon. Member that the amount of money spent by the Department of Agriculture for research has not been cut by one cent as a result of the Minister of Finance's reductions in over-all expenditure.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister for his comments regarding the advantages to farmers particularly, but also to loggers, miners and fishermen, of the diesel fuel rebate which amounted to cents. In most parts of Canada the increase in price they had to pay for diesel fuel was more than the rebate. Will the Minister confirm that the Government gave a rebate to assist the farmers, miners, loggers and fishermen with one hand and then raised the price of their diesel fuel with the other, so that, in a sense, they were right back where they started?

● (1240)

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, I am a little bit surprised at the Hon. Member. I think of anyone on that side he should know better. He should know there was a tax reduction of three cents a litre, which is something like 13 cents a gallon. At the same time there was an increase of 1.8 cents a litre in order that we could balance the books of the energy account, as we are required to by law. That was not collected from farmers. Sure, you can make the argument that we gave with one hand and took away with the other; but the net effect is still a reduction of something like eight or nine cents a gallon on fuel used by the groups the Hon. Member has referred to.

He should also know that the farmers, fishermen and loggers of his area are now eligible for a tax reduction of something like 28.5 cents a gallon. The Hon. Member should know above all, being in the position he is in his Party, that the

reduction was genuine and the one did not cancel out the other.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The period for questions and comments is now over. We shall now resume debate with the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson).

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Just a couple of comments with respect to the debate which has been taking place, Mr. Speaker. One of the luxuries in which you can indulge yourself, especially when you have no sense of responsibility as is evidently the case with Members of the NDP, is that whenever a tax increase is imposed you can condemn it; whenever a reduction in government expenditure is proposed you can condemn it; and at the same time you can condemn the deficit. You cannot have it both ways.

**Mr. Althouse:** You used to.

**Mr. Nickerson:** When you find yourself on this side of the House, a situation in which the NDP will never find itself, then you have to take on that sense of responsibility. You have to work towards a balance in government finances.

**Mr. Riis:** It is called changing your mind.

**Mr. Nickerson:** That is precisely what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall) are doing.

**Mr. Murphy:** What did they say before the election?

**Mr. Nickerson:** It has been brought to our attention that the Bill we are dealing with today is largely a Liberal initiative. It is that, with the exception of the fuel tax rebate which the Liberals had no intention of granting to resource producers. This, as we have heard, even from members of the Opposition, will do much to assist the primary producers. It will certainly assist the trappers, miners and fishermen in my area. Equally it will help agriculturalists and loggers in other parts of the country.

However, we are dealing with what is in many respects a Liberal Bill. That would explain why the members of the Liberal Party are almost as quiet as church mice on this issue. Even the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker), usually one of the most vocal Members of this House, has been deafening in his silence this morning.

The money that will be raised under the measures before us today has already been spent, Mr. Speaker. It was part of the so-called special recovery projects and, if you recall, they were brought in not too long before the previous election. The idea was that the Liberals would spend all this money and buy themselves votes. They were going to try and buy themselves back into office. Needless to say the Canadian citizenry did not buy that idea and they condemned the Liberals to a spot in the Canadian political spectrum from which they will never, in my opinion, recover. The money had been spent and the taxes to pay for it were not to come into effect until after the election. That was a dastardly trick and it is a pleasure for me