

Restraint of Government Expenditures

It went on to say:

Personal expenditures on goods and services were a major source of sustaining strength during the cyclical decline and a further support during 1975.

The government chose to rob Canadian families of \$230 million in 1976 in the name of so-called fiscal restraint. Why did they not attack those who cause inflation? Why does not the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald), for example, suggest that the president of Massey Ferguson, whose income is now in the order of \$330,000 a year, be required to show some restraint? Why was his last year's increase not taxed away, instead of taking away a few dollars a month from families? The family allowance with full indexing for the high and upper middle income families should be taxed away through income tax. There is no real cost to the taxpayer and there is no real increase in inflation when family allowances are indexed. But the old line parties still attack people. They have not changed. They promise to take money from the rich and votes from the poor, and then they promise to protect them from each other.

● (1230)

I want to get to the matter of freight rates and make reference to a remark of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain. I do not recall his exact words, but he said something about the NDP and the Liberals being the same. I am not sure exactly what he meant.

Mr. Brisco: Look at the voting record.

Mr. Benjamin: My hon. friend says, "Look at the voting record". I remind him that all the Tories present voted with the Liberals against all grains being under the Canadian Wheat Board. If that is not an unholy partnership in bed, I have never seen one.

I would like to give two examples of the betrayal of Atlantic Canada, western Canada and northern Canada by the Grits and the Tories. They fundamentally agree in principle. There is no basic difference between them on how to order the economy of this country in the area of transportation when it comes to passenger trains. The minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) says he is going to revitalize and improve the passenger trains' service by reducing their number. I do not know how he can do that, but that is what he says. Then I will be darned if the Tories didn't agree with him. The Tory transportation critic appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications and said that we should reduce the service to one transcontinental passenger train, although he would run it over a slightly different route. He left out the riding of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). I am sure the folks at Jasper, Edson and Hinton will be glad to hear that.

The Tories agree with the Minister of Transport that there should be only one transcontinental passenger train and inland terminals, an item of economic exploitation which will mean the death of scores of towns and villages in the prairie provinces which would otherwise be viable. The hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) and the minister of agriculture of the Tory government in Edmonton agreed that we should have

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inland terminals. They not only agreed that we should have them, but also that they should receive incentives. So Tories agree with Liberals on inland terminals. In fact, they even want to help outfits like the Cargill Grain Company.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain had best be careful. Let us look at the Crowsnest rate, the statutory grain rate. By golly, hon. members of the opposition have fought that battle for many years in this place. I want to give credit to a former member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale for his work with regard to rapeseed and rapeseed products, as well as his predecessor, a CCF member from the same riding, who led that fight, and a former prime minister, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), who arranged that rapeseed and rapeseed products would be under the statutory rates. Now the Minister of Transport arranges that, after all the appeals and hearings, the cabinet's decision is that the railroads will receive compensatory rates on rapeseed products.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): You could call that "statutory rape rates."

Mr. Benjamin: That is to be expected, but I will be darned if the Conservative minister of agriculture in Alberta does not agree that the compensatory rates on rapeseed products should apply, and not the statutory rates. I warn the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain that he had better be looking over his shoulder at who is supporting the Liberals and who is agreeing with the Minister of Transport.

As I mentioned, the Conservatives chose to get into bed with the Liberals on the matter of all grains being under the sole jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and they screamed at the NDP saying that it is undemocratic and that it will try to force it down the farmers' throats. Far from that, in fact if my hon. friends in the Liberal and Tory parties would like to attend the National Farmers' Union convention in Edmonton next month, or the Saskatchewan, Alberta or Manitoba wheat pool conventions, they will find that they have had their plebiscite many times in forty years. The overwhelming majority of grain producers have said time and time again at their subdistrict meetings and at their annual conventions that that is what they want. It has been an article of faith with the overwhelming majority of grain producers since the early 1930s. The plebiscite has been held many times, and I suggest that hon. gentlemen who belong to the Liberal and Tory parties should wake up and quit living together in the 1890s when it comes to farm grains being under the Canadian Wheat Board and orderly marketing for any farm product. Farmers who produce other kinds of agricultural products have repeatedly asked for orderly marketing, but the Grits and Tories cling to 1890 concepts of the free and open market. It is free and open for middlemen and end retailers, but not for primary producers.

Let me turn now to clause 15 of the bill which proposes to repeal section 272 of the Railway Act. In a country like ours, with a large geography, a diverse and often harsh climate, and a population which is widely scattered, much of it isolated, we