

Mortgage Tax Credit

Mr. Evans: What about small business? What about the priorities? Let us talk about the priorities. Small business is choking on this government's high interest rate policy. What about the priorities for small business? Could they use part of the \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion? What about pensioners who are having a difficult time even getting by? What about single parents? What about the unemployed? What about our commitment to reduce inflation? Where is the commitment to reduce inflation?

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Evans: Where are the priorities of this government?

An hon. Member: It has got none.

Mr. Evans: Is this the time to take scarce federal revenues—they are scarce—we admit they are scarce—

An hon. Member: Why are they scarce?

Mr. Evans: You should recognize they are scarce.

An hon. Member: Because of the new government.

Mr. Evans:—that are needed for very worthy and legitimate social and economic programs, and throw them away on a callous economic and political gimmick? I say no, it is not the time to do this. Is this the time to add a structural change to the tax system which will cost \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion a year, when we must move to stimulate energy development and when we must move to stimulate secondary industry, when we are already running a deficit of \$11 billion that we hear about every day in this House from the Minister of Finance?

I suggest that in view of the clear and pressing priorities, this bill is irresponsible beyond all reason.

An hon. Member: Bunglers. New government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Evans: It clearly shows that the economic vision of this government is not only short-sighted, it is totally lacking. The hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood mentioned earlier today that during the last session of parliament the House sent a non-partisan group from all parties to the United States to examine its program which has similar features to the one being proposed by this government. They talked to people all across the United States who knew about the effects of this program. To a person they suggested and recommended strongly to this government of Canada, "Don't do it. It is a bad policy."

An hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Evans: Members of that committee, one is sitting behind you, came back and unanimously recommended against the introduction of this policy. The current Prime Minister (Mr. Clark), in the same spirit and with the same forethought as his promise to move the embassy, disregarded that sound advice in exchange for short-term political gains. We paid the

[Mr. Evans.]

price for Jerusalem and we will pay the price for this one, if it goes through, as well. I appeal to the government on grounds of equity, efficiency, necessity, and cost, to be responsible, to look at the future and realize that the budgetary problems we face are serious and that our options are few.

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I call on the government to consider the priorities of Canada, the real needs of Canadians, to realize that this program is a major error which will dramatically reduce the government's fiscal flexibility and exacerbate the budgetary problems we will face in the future. The people know the facts and they know that this government is not delivering the goods. Well, not having been in session for six months, how could they? Sure we would all like to lower taxes, sure we would all like more for less, but we know the facts; there is just no free lunch, and it is fraudulent to try to tell the people otherwise.

You cannot tell the people how tough times are out of one side of your mouth, and then tell them we are so flush that we can afford to throw \$2½ billion to \$3 billion per year into an election promise which is not directed at the real problem facing this country. You cannot tell the people they have to cough up billions in higher energy costs and then tell them we have the funds for this type of program. You cannot tell the people that they have to pay record interest rates because of budget and trade deficits, and then tell them we can afford a non-productive use of government funds in this day. No, Mr. Speaker, the people are not fools, and they resent being treated as such. This bill is just such an attempt.

I call upon the government to come to its senses and withdraw this bill in the best interests of Canada and Canadians.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Speak for big business.

Mr. Nielsen: I come from an area that is chock full of big business. It really astounds me to hear the hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) speak like he did. I can only attribute it to the fact that he is getting used to the place. He is a member of the party who were the originators of the highest interest rates in our history—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen:—who were the originators of the highest taxes in our history—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen:—who were the originators of the highest unemployment rate in our history—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!