

*Energy*

some free enterprise business. So the people bought it, and they were misled, they were misinformed, they were poorly directed and hoodwinked by the then opposition into believing that their increase would be much less than the 18 cents a gallon increase that the Clark government was going to bring out.

What did the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), then leader of the opposition, say in January of 1980? He said that he would make sure that the people of Canada would not feel the tax of 18 cents, that he would take it upon himself to see that the price of gas would not rise by way of taxes more than 14 cents, to use his words.

What in reality has happened to gas prices since then? Well, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this government fooled the people of Canada again, as it did on wage and price controls. It literally conned them into believing that it was the saviour sent to govern this country, to bring the price of gasoline down, to hold energy prices at a level that the people could afford, to create jobs, to control the growth in government, to have government live within the means at its disposal, namely its revenues.

● (2010)

What went wrong? The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources failed to admit in the House today that they cannot produce a tax system of revenue to feed their insatiable quest for dollars. What government in the world can continue to promise the people that it will control expenses, bring down the cost of government, and then continue to mislead, misrepresent and spend on a daily basis 25 per cent more than it takes in each year?

How has the government controlled the growth of energy cost to the consumers of Canada? It has not done it, it cannot do it, and it will not admit it. For example, the government is implementing an energy policy for one ulterior motive, that is, to seize wealth for public ownership and thus socialize the country under a strong unitary central government. It will turn the country into a republic run by the Liberal democratic party which has only one ulterior motive in mind. No matter how it is accomplished, it wishes to seize control of the free enterprise system and drive independent businessmen out of business.

When the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) was in opposition a few months ago, he said that if he were in power when interest rates rose to the level they were when the Conservatives were in power, he would resign. Where is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce now? He did not resign; he did not hold interest rates to our 10 per cent, 10.5 per cent or 11 per cent. What are the interest rates today? How are they affecting people in the energy business across the country?

I should like to refer to a letter dated May 14, 1981, which I received from Canadian Energy Systems. It was addressed to me and reads as follows:

As our MP, would you kindly put the following question to the finance minister of the opposition? Do you have a mortgage on your home that is due in the near future?

The author of the letter was referring to the government of the day. He was asking me to ask the present Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) whether he had a mortgage on his home which is now due.

This man from Canadian Energy Systems went on to indicate:

Unfortunately, I am in the position of having to renew my mortgage in October of this year. Presently I am paying interest at the rate of 12 per cent. It appears that I will be faced with an increase of 6 per cent or more!

He continued:

I'm sure that the average "blue-collar" worker will be seeking larger than ever wage settlements in order to cope with interest rates also.

As a small businessman owning Canadian Energy Systems in Peterborough, he said:

—the only way I can afford these exorbitant interest rates is to raise the price of the goods I sell. Is this not considered by the minister to be inflationary?

Where are the priorities of the government at a time when people on low and fixed incomes are losing their businesses, homes and farms? The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is on record as having some degree of sympathy for farmers. What is he doing about it? What is the Minister of Finance doing to hold down interest? What is the minister responsible for housing doing to fight and lobby to keep down the interest rates on homes on behalf of people who are losing their homes? What is the Minister of Finance doing for farmers in his province who are losing their farms at a rate higher than ever in the history of the country? What do they say in the government? They say that if a small business is incorporated, the government will give some relief through the government bond issue which can be lent out at a lower rate. But what is the government doing for unincorporated small businessmen? Is that privilege being extended to them? The government does not care. Is it being extended to independent farmers, the salt of the earth? They are the people who first settled in the country; they are the people who feed us and a great deal of the world today. What is the government doing for small farmers? Is it extending the bond program so that the farmers faced with high energy costs can obtain money at a low interest rate? The government does not care about the farm community. If the farm is big, or if it is a German investor or an investor from some other foreign country who comes here to buy a block of land and incorporates, the government will help. But, what does the government do for independent farmers who are losing their farms at a rate unsurpassed at any other time in history? The government does not care.

What did members of the government say during the last election campaign about the rising cost of energy under the Clark government? What would they do if they were elected? They said that they could not afford to cause prices to rise to world levels and that it was too much for Canadian industry to pay for oil and gas. What do they say today with the present facts which we have to consider? Are they prepared to lower the price of gasoline as the price drops on the world market?