

Adjournment Debate

increased costs to the farmers. However, both are very concerned about railway expenses and let the CPR off the hook with regard to gifts of land and resources given it when original contracts and agreements were made. The farmer pays.

The time allotted permits me to mention only one other area where the farmer, the producer of our food, gets the dirty end of the stick from this government. During the last federal election the Liberal Party promised farmers low prices for fuel used to produce food. During its two years in office, since the 1980 election, fuel prices have increased at least 67 per cent.

The Clark budget in 1979 provided a tax shelter in the form of a rebate to farmers on at least a portion of the gasoline taxes. The MacEachen budget makes no such provision and all the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) can say is, "Canadians farmers do not pay as much for their fuel as do United States farmers". With this general statement he sweeps the matter under the rug and makes no mention of other factors that U.S. farmers are not subjected to, such as imposed metric, demurrage charges, lack of boxcars, capital gains taxes, cancellation of IAACs, and the increased cost of machinery. This government would not even give consideration to helping the rural gas co-ops of Alberta to keep their administrative overhead down by increasing the number of days. Nor would it consider withholding or reducing taxes on natural gas used in the production of food.

• (2215)

The Progressive Conservative Party has urged that capital gains taxes be eliminated on land producing food; the Liberal government said no. The Progressive Conservative Party has urged that the capital cost allowance and income averaging annuity contracts be left as they were before November 12; so far the Liberals say no. This party asks for a rebate to food producers for high fuel costs and the Liberal minister's answer is something about being at the wrong end of a bull.

The farmers of Canada are becoming increasingly angry. They ask only for fair prices and fair treatment, and they are getting neither from this federal government.

Mr. Ralph Ferguson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) I should like to point out that the massive program of upgrading the railway system in Canada is well known to most Canadians, and consequently we are looking forward to the best possible utilization of hopper cars and rail lines. However, I also want to point out that we have an excellent network of highways and roads across this country which can be used all year round by trucks and other vehicles in a better way than we can use some of our rail lines. In other words, the highways can be utilized in a much more diversified way.

The hon. member mentions the metric system. I suppose we should remind him that metric legislation was originally brought in back in 1871 by, I think, Sir John A. Macdonald. Now we have a Conservative complaining about it.

Mr. Taylor: It was voluntary then, not imposed.

Mr. Ferguson: I would also like to point out that in the 1980 campaign we said we would set a made-in-Canada energy pricing policy to secure adequate supplies at reasonable prices. We achieved this last September.

Mr. Taylor: And it went up 67 per cent.

Mr. Ferguson: The hon. member went on to point out that natural gas prices constitute a big component of the cost of producing food. I would like to point out to him that, under their budget, natural gas in 1984 would be \$11 per thousand cubic feet. Under our agreement it will be \$7.90, a saving to the farmer of \$3.10.

Mr. Taylor: Nonsense.

Mr. Ferguson: Certainly that is substantial evidence of itself, when you consider that natural gas is a big component of nitrogen-based fertilizer. I think the Liberal government and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) have done extremely well in fulfilling the commitments made during those exciting days two years ago, and it was of extreme interest to me when my opponent in that election divorced himself from the budget put forward by the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). He realized what it would have done to us. We had to set about to correct the situation, and I want to commend our government for doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

• (2220)

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION—RECOMMENDATION
CONCERNING SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to take a few moments to bring before all hon. members of this House a matter of very great concern to all Canadians, and particularly to millions of Canadian women. Recent studies have shown that, depending upon the job sector and the age grouping, some 70 per cent to 90 per cent of working women experience some form of sexual harassment on the job.

What is sexual harassment? It is difficult to define. It can range from sexual innuendo, perhaps in the guise of humour, to coerced sexual relations. It can include a variety of behaviour, such as verbal harassment or abuse, sexist jokes, subtle pressure for sexual activity, sexist remarks about a woman's clothing, body or sexual activities, unnecessary touching, patting or pinching, such as a casual pat on the backside, leering at a woman's body, constant brushing against a woman's body, demanding sexual favours accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job, or physical assault. Ultimately, although it is very difficult to define, sexual harassment is a coercive relationship.

On April 8, last, I asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) what action the Liberal government was prepared to take on the recommendations of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in its 1980 annual report, which stated: