

*Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax Act*

I could go on at great length, Madam Speaker, but I am sure that you would call me to relevance if I tried to articulate all the ways in which Manitoba has been unrepresented or badly represented since the Progressive Conservative Government took power in 1984. In all sincerity I believe that during the debate on the National Energy Program Progressive Conservatives reached the point of saying "western Canada" when in fact they meant only the oil and gas sector of Alberta. They convinced themselves at that time that they were the only legitimate spokespersons for western Canada and that those of us who may have disagreed with them on certain elements of the National Energy Program, although we agreed with them on others such as the PGRT, did not speak for western Canada. Yet we did speak for western Canada and we speak for western Canada now when we say the Government has not paid attention to the legitimate needs and concerns of the Province of Manitoba on the CF-18 contract. The effect of that decision in western Canada will be far-reaching.

• (1620)

I imagine a great many people in Alberta are concerned about that decision as well. For decades they were told by Progressive Conservative candidates that this kind of thing would happen only under the auspices of the big bad Liberals. If a Progressive Conservative Government were elected that kind of thing would never happen. So what have western Canadians, particularly those in Manitoba, found? They have found that these kinds of things happen under the Conservatives. For years they were told something that was not necessarily true. The worst of it is that they were told this by people who knew it was not necessarily true when they told them. It is for those reasons that I am glad to have had the opportunity in this debate to have said those few words.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Questions or comments.

**Mr. Edwards:** Madam Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity to try and set the record straight. I am very pleased that the Hon. Member gave credit to this Government for properly living up to its election promises to the people of western Canada, particularly regarding today's event which is a wake in honour of the death of the National Energy Program.

Does the Hon. Member not recognize that the electorate in western Canada has been pronouncing his party to be the party of reaction and the *status quo*? Does he not recognize that the Progressive Conservative Government of Canada has been responding to the needs of individual, small enterprise Canadians and workers in the oil fields without any kind of giveaway to the oil companies? Far to the contrary, the abolition of the PGRT is the final discharge of promises made by the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) on July 6, 1984. At that time, in his famous red barn speech, he said the Liberal Government had decimated the western economy through the NEP.

Does the Hon. Member not recognize the total extent of federal financial assistance to western Canada, including Manitoba, over the two years this Government has been in

office? Does he not recognize that total federal assistance to agriculture is \$4.5 billion compared to \$2.8 billion during the last two years of the previous Government? That does not even take into account the \$1 billion promised by the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago. Does the Hon. Member not recognize the relief a western Canadian farmer now experiences when he fills his 100-gallon tank with diesel fuel? An Alberta farmer paid \$115 for that fuel in September, 1984. He will now pay about \$40. That will save a farmer with 1,200 acres over \$5,000 annually on his fuel bill.

I wish to leave the Hon. Member a little time to respond to my questions but I would just ask him whether he will not acknowledge that this Government has done more for western Canada in agriculture and in the critical energy field than any Government since that of the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, very strange claims are being made by the Hon. Member. He claims the people of western Canada have been particularly mean to the NDP of late. I remind him that we got more votes than the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan. In the most recent Alberta election we made a major breakthrough and elected 16 Members. In Manitoba we were re-elected. We have the possible exception of B.C., which I would not like to exaggerate, but in the three prairie provinces it does not exactly look as if the NDP has been taking a beating.

**Mr. Edwards:** The farmers of the west have rejected you totally.

**Mr. Blaikie:** The Member was not listening to the claim I was making. I did claim that the Progressive Conservative Government had lived up to the promises it had made to the oil and gas sector. I never quarrelled with that. What I argued was that that was too narrow a focus if you were interested in responding to the needs of western Canada.

**Mr. Edwards:** What about the farmers?

**Mr. Blaikie:** I argued that the Progressive Conservative Government has paid absolutely no attention to Winnipeg. In fact, it has actively harmed its future. I notice the Hon. Member did not get up and try and deny that. That is the point I was making and I wish he would pay more attention in future.

He talked about all this federal money going to the provinces. What about the cut-back in transfer payments to have-not provinces like Manitoba? It is all well and good for him, being from Alberta, to not pay attention to that. However, provinces like Manitoba depend on equalization payments and EPF. What has been the behaviour of his Government in that area? It has looked for each and every way it could possibly find to cut back on transfer payments. Do not give me a lot of crap about how generous his Government has been to Winnipeg because it has not been. The Government's Manitoba Members might as well not even be on that side for all that has happened to Winnipeg since the Government was elected. We have been shafted left, right and centre and it is about time it stopped.