

opinion on whether the Government has broken this promise as well?

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, the Government has broken a number of promises made in the 1984 election campaign. Promise number 11 was to expand agriculture research and development by providing greater assistance. The Estimates for the Department of Agriculture for this year show that the research budget has been reduced by \$23 million. I think this is unconscionable because research will not provide a pay-back this year or next, year, but several years in the future.

The Tories promised to establish a national marketing board for tobacco, and that promise was broken. The Tories made a commitment to revise Section 31 of the Income Tax Act to reflect the principles of equity. The Government, of course, has not acted on that. Promise number 14 was to allocate the necessary funding to assist producers in refinancing their loans at current prevailing rates. The current rate of the Bank of Canada is around 9 per cent. If the Government implemented that promise it would save farmers a lot of interest.

With regard to the agribond program, the committee studied this and came up with a very workable program but, unfortunately, it was not reflected in either of the two Budgets we have had since then, or in the Speech from the Throne on Wednesday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, may I begin by congratulating you on your appointment. We were very pleased to have you for the past two years. I hope to see you there for another two years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Oostrom: May I also extend my heartiest congratulations to the Hon. Member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) who was elected Speaker three days ago. I did not at all mind spending 11 hours here to elect the Speaker. The patience of all of us augurs well for the future. The manner in which our newly elected Speaker has conducted himself over the past three days, the wisdom with which he has spoken and the collective confidence that he has in us and we have in him also augurs well for the future.

[Translation]

I also noted the presence of the NDP Members in the House this afternoon during the speech of our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). Forty per cent of the NDP Members were here, but only 5 per cent of the Liberals. This gives me a good idea of which party provides the real opposition in this House.

[English]

I would like to compliment the mover and seconder, the Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins) and the Member for Restigouche (Mr. Girard). They gave very eloquent and in-

depth replies to the Throne Speech. My congratulations to both of them.

The Address—Mr. Oostrom

I represent the riding of Willowdale which is geographically located at the epicentre of Metropolitan Toronto. Willowdale is a very stable and hard-working community, the roots of which stretch back to the United Empire Loyalists. The community is now a multicultural mosaic and its people have become integral members of the community of Willowdale. I feel very honoured to represent them as their Member of Parliament because I am also part of that mosaic as I come from Holland. I am very proud to be their representative.

The constituents of my riding are very industrious, innovative and inventive. We need that spirit for the future of Canada. They are very proud to be members of the Willowdale community. Their pride is reflected in their residences, their strong community involvement and their ability to give of themselves unselfishly to many charitable causes.

Willowdale is the administrative and cultural centre of the City of North York and I am happy to say it is presently in the middle of an economic boom. The downtown core of the City of North York—the city with a heart, as our Mayor says—is beginning to rival that of Toronto in construction and economic activity. Willowdale, blessed with hard-working people and a favourable geographic location, is fast becoming the heart of Metropolitan Toronto.

Throughout the summer, as I have done in previous years, I went door-to-door in my riding asking my constituents what they thought of the Government and if there were any issues they felt should be addressed. I managed to visit personally over 6,000 households. The response by the people of Willowdale toward the Government and its policies was very positive. Although I got an earful on some issues, in general the response was very supportive.

The people of Willowdale were very impressed with the agenda put forth in our first Throne Speech. Our second Throne Speech will continue the Government's commitment to enacting legislation which will continue to benefit all Canadians. People remember the tough economic times they experienced prior to the 1984 election. They remember the high energy prices, the runaway inflation, the high interest rates, the high unemployment, the lack of economic direction, the massive deficit, and non-existent social justice.

In just two short years the Progressive Conservative Government has taken significant action toward rebuilding the Canadian economy. This is the best economic recovery that any western country has ever seen. Confidence has been restored and jobs have been created. Interest rates are down and the deficit is falling. Before September, 1984, 11.7 per cent of the workforce was unemployed. Today the rate is down two full percentage points to 9.9 per cent. This is the lowest level in four years. These are indeed big ticket items.