

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, I never asked the minister whether he was going to bring in my programs. He has brought in most of them already, but this one he will not bring in.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Might I remind the minister that the refundable energy tax credit has been found to be a very progressive measure that would help the lower income people in this country and no one but the lower income people. So I want to remind him of that.

* * *

ENERGY TAX CREDIT

REQUEST THAT CONSERVATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BE IMPLEMENTED

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): My supplementary question to the minister is this: Dian Cohen and other observers have pointed out that home heating oil costs are going to increase something like \$8 a month as a result of the minister's budget, unemployment insurance contributions \$7 a month and the average driver will have to face an increase of \$7 a month. Miss Cohen estimates the tax bite at around \$300 a year for the average taxpayer and home owner. Could I also remind the minister that more and more families are going to run into credit difficulties in this period of high interest rates.

In view of these facts, will the minister forget the mortgage interest and property tax program—he is not going to help home owners—and will he bring in an energy tax credit, similar to the one we proposed last year to help the low and middle income people of this country, 70 per cent of which would go to people who earn under \$20,000 a year. Will the minister do that? Can the minister bring himself to do that and help these people upon whom he has imposed high taxes?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, it is obviously worth repeating what I have stated on earlier occasions, namely, that it is not my intention to bring in an energy tax credit.

An hon. Member: Why not?

Mr. MacEachen: It is not because the government did not consider the impact of increased energy prices on all groups in the country.

Mr. McGrath: That is to your discredit, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen: We decided not to bring it in because over the four-year period the burden of increased energy prices put forward in the budget will be about \$1,200 less per family than was the case in the Tory budget, including the energy tax credit.

An hon. Member: That is a lie.

Oral Questions

An hon. Member: Treat us seriously, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen: They will be better off by \$1,200 over the next period of time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: That is my belief and that is why I did not bring in an energy tax credit. If hon. members want to attack those statistics and prove them wrong, then, of course, they are free to do so. But it is on the basis of those facts that the energy tax credit was not brought in.

* * *

INDUSTRY

WHITE FARM EQUIPMENT—INQUIRY AS TO ACTION TO AVERT CLOSURE

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that White Motor Company in the United States is about to close out its Canadian subsidiary, White Farm Equipment of Brantford, Ontario, throwing 1,200 employees out of work, in view of the fact that this will cause grave financial and psychological strain on the workers and their families in an already depressed community, and in view of the further fact that the employees and retirees may lose all or part of their pension benefits, what specifically, and in concrete terms, is the federal government going to do to save this very viable farm implement company which is yet another victim of a foreign-owned multinational?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, we are keeping in very close touch with developments connected with the White Motor Company.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gray: We are very much aware of the importance of the company in terms of the over-all viability of the farm machinery sector. We certainly want to see what can be done to ensure the viability of the sector as a whole, including the White Motor component.

Mr. Blackburn: Madam Speaker, I am getting rather tired of these answers from the minister which mean absolutely nothing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Bring it up in caucus.

Mr. Blackburn: My supplementary question is directed to the same minister. Given that White Farm Equipment already owes Massey-Ferguson about \$2 million, and in view of the fact that White Farm has developed and produced the 9700 combine, largely at public expense through research and development grants from the federal government, which could greatly assist Massey-Ferguson in its own recovery, would the