

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE****MINISTER'S POSITION ON BUDGET**

Hon. John Wise (Elgin): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture who will recall that, two or three days prior to the budget, I asked the Minister whether or not he had made representations on behalf of the industry to his colleague, the Minister of Finance. We have had the budget now for seven days, the Minister has had an opportunity to assess its impact or lack of impact on the agricultural industry. Therefore, does the Minister stand by some comments and concerns expressed publicly by his Liberal backbench colleagues, or does he stand by the budget of his cabinet colleague, the Minister of Finance, and turn his back on the industry which he has represented in Cabinet for nearly 11 years?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I have just seen a publication called the "Conservative Agriculture Policy for Canada", published in some eastern newspapers. One of the things that document asks for, and the Minister of Finance put it in his budget, was \$100 million extra for farmers who needed extra compensation because of the dire economic straits in which they found themselves. The Hon. Member did not say the Minister of Finance did what his Party requested. There are many other things in the budget for business people. Farmers have the same right to participate in those programs as do the business people.

I have studied the budget. There is not everything in there that I would have liked to have seen, but there is a lot in there for farmers. I have not seen the press article the Hon. Member is referring to when he says my colleagues have made some comment. I am not aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wise: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Minister has read the ten point agricultural program put out by the Conservative Party. I recognize the fact that the Government has accepted point number one, and it would do well to accept the remaining nine.

INFLUENCE EXERCISED BY MINISTER ON BUDGET PREPARATION

Hon. John Wise (Elgin): Madam Speaker, the Minister did not answer my question directly. I ask if he was pleased with the fact that the agri-bond concept was omitted? Was he pleased with the omission of any reduction in the farm fuel tax and assistance for greenhouse operators, who are particularly heavily concentrated in his own riding and in mine? Was he also pleased that indeed the Minister of National Revenue had no more influence on the Minister of Finance than he himself did with respect to bringing about any changes in Section 31 of the Income Tax Act, and the problems with it that have been caused by the Government?

● (1450)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that maybe the amendment

to Section 31 was not there, but the very fact that they can write off their losses back three years and ahead ten years gives them practically the same privilege they were asking for in the amendment of Section 31 of the Income Tax Act.

An Hon. Member: No, it does not.

Mr. Whelan: Yes, it does. It gives them that, maybe not exactly, but practically gives them all they want.

If everyone got everything they wanted in the budget, the Minister of Finance, who talked for nearly two hours in the House the other night, would have talked for four hours. I did not get everything I wanted. You stay in the big leagues if you bat fifty-fifty.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS**APPLICATION OF GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT PROGRAM TO LA SOCIÉTÉ IMMOBILIÈRE DU CANADA**

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. Somebody mentioned earlier that some Crown corporations will not comply with the 6 and 5 program. Can the Minister tell us whether it is true that la Société immobilière du Canada (Mirabel) Ltée was recently exempted from the provisions of the Public Sector Compensation Restraint Act?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I shall check, but I would be very surprised if that were true. In fact, as the Hon. Member already knows, in the case of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, because a mistake had been made and the ruling had not been submitted to the Treasury Board Committee as it should have been, the ruling was reversed and the necessary adjustments were made to conform to the 6 and 5 program.

Mr. La Salle: Madam Speaker, I have here a copy of an order from the Clerk of the Privy Council which states the following:

His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the President of the Treasury Board, pursuant to section 16 of the Public Sector Compensation Restraint Act, is pleased hereby to terminate the application of the said Act in respect of the employees of the corporation . . . in clerical, technical, professional and middle management positions.

Under these circumstances, will the Minister make this ruling public as soon as possible and will he tell us how many employees are involved and why this corporation should be exempted from the Government restraint program?

Mr. LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, if I heard the Hon. Member correctly, he mentioned the President of the Treasury Board. I shall therefore consult my colleague and try to answer this question tomorrow.