

Excise Tax Act

and says that the previous Government was ineffective and incapable of running this country, to come up every two or three days with Bills that are similar and sometimes identical to those of the previous Government. How come then, if the previous Government was unable to govern the country, this new Government has chosen to copy the bills the former Government introduced?

● (1510)

[*English*]

When I was in elementary school, if I had tried to copy or use someone else's notes it would have been referred to as copying, and in university as plagiarism, meaning the same thing, of course. But when the Government introduces Bills previously introduced by the Liberals, it should put a little note at the bottom of these Bills, or an acknowledgment of the fact, even a note to say that most of the Bill had been presented before by the Liberals, if that were the case. I think this would be only fair. The person who spoke before me is indeed a very sincere Member and one who would want to give due credit to those involved in presenting similar legislation. We know the Hon. Member would not want to take credit for anything that he did not do. We recognize that on this side of the House. Perhaps this is an oversight. It was not mentioned in the previous speech or in the speech of the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall).

There are some good points in the Bill. There are some differences. One of the issues raised in this Bill is the gasoline and diesel fuel rebate for off-highway use by farmers, loggers, fishermen and miners. At least part of one of the 388 promises will be fulfilled by this measure. We are still waiting for the other 330-odd promises that have yet to be fulfilled but probably never will be.

In recognizing that one promise was made, I find that there was perhaps a parallel promise that was forgotten. I want to draw something to your attention because I know that you will be very interested in this, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

I find it rather unusual, Mr. Speaker, that during the recent election campaign the government failed to tell us—and no doubt it is an oversight on the part of the Progressive Conservative Party—that while a rebate on fuel would be granted, an additional \$6.2 million cut would be made in dairy programs.

I also find it rather unusual, for example, that the government failed to tell us that \$9.4 million will be cut in the Department of Agriculture budget. Canadian farmers who will be receiving that rebate cheque from the government will quickly lose it directly or indirectly and their loss will probably be higher than their gains. On the one hand, the government gives out \$1 and on the other, it takes back \$2.

It seems to me that this is what will happen according to the financial statement or under the programs put forward by the new government. For example, Canagrex will be abolished:

that is a \$6.6 million cut in the agriculture program. Some members stated earlier that they agree that Canagrex should be disbanded. The government will very soon introduce a similar bill changing the name of the corporation but entrusting it with duties similar to those given to Canagrex by the Liberals. In any case, agricultural programs are being cancelled.

If we speak so often about farmers, Mr. Speaker, it is because it should not be forgotten that the fuel tax rebate cheque will be handed to our farmers by the government. Therefore, we should always bear in mind that what the government gives with one hand it takes back with the other, but it always takes more than it gives, particularly when it is a Conservative government.

I would like to point out next, Mr. Speaker, the cut or cancellation of the \$3.5 million forest research project in Corner Brook and in St. John's, Newfoundland. In the agricultural services, \$32.3 million will be recovered. Mr. Speaker, do you know what cost recovery means? It is a tax in disguise. It may be that Conservative speakers who spoke of that project forgot to mention it but cost recovery is direct or indirect taxation. The truth is that even the farmer who receives a cheque with the signature of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) or the Prime Minister or any other minister will have to pay back to the government money he would not have paid before. As far as I am concerned, I call that a tax and farmers who will have to pay it will call it a tax too. Those farmers will feel betrayed by this government who did not act in good faith and did not keep his election promises.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply to the previous speaker, who said that under the Liberal government bills lingered on. I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, who let the bells ring during the last Parliament? Who is it that brought the parliamentary process to a halt? Was it the Liberal Party? No, Mr. Speaker, it was the Progressive Conservative Party which did that. And they have the gall to accuse the Liberal Party of allowing some bills to die on the Order Paper!

● (1520)

Members of the Liberal Party were here and they wanted to work. If the Progressive Conservative Party had really been sincere in its concern for the welfare of the Canadian public, its members would have come to the House when called; they would have sat, debated the various bills and voted on them according to their opinion. Hon. Members may be for or against a bill, but when they refuse to sit while being paid for representing and being the servant of their constituents, in my view they are certainly misbehaving.

Being in a non-partisan position, Mr. Speaker, you will certainly agree with me that my constituents and all Canadians have elected me and all other members of the House in order for us to represent them in Parliament. Therefore, when some 100 members of the House decided to let the bell ring