

Excise Tax Act

Broadbent also had soothing words for the Manitoba party, turfed last year from power in a provincial election that gave the NDP a humbling 12 seats in the legislature.

All movements suffer losses and the electorate punishes mistakes, but people eventually see where their best interests are, he said. "They'll go back very quickly to the NDP in this province."

Now, the polls certainly do not indicate that they are returning to that particular fold. Indeed, the polls indicate that they are turning with renewed enthusiasm and interest to the Liberal Party. The Hon. Member from Portage—Interlake (Mr. Holtmann), who obviously has problems in his own riding, had the good sense to abstain on one of the votes on the Budget because he knew what a disaster the Budget would be for him electorally. I am surprised that the same thing has not occurred with more Hon. Members opposite. The Minister of State for Privatization (Mr. McDermid) must be shaking in his boots. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg South (Mrs. Dobbie) must be shaking in her boots, because she must know that her chances in the next election are slimming fast. Those are the Minister of State's new boots, presumably purchased for the Budget.

• (2100)

Judy Wasylcia-Leis, on talking the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) out of resigning, said:

I don't expect to succeed, especially now that Ed Broadbent has been offered a full-time job with the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

That is a quotation from the *Winnipeg Free Press*. And here in this Budget the Government opposite is cutting back on the CBC. How can the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) take his position with the CBC when the Government is cutting back its budget? How can the Royal Canadian Air Farce appear as regularly as it ought to?

We have here an illustration of the kind of problem that the New Democratic Party gets into whenever it gets into office. It starts to act the way this Government is acting; it hikes taxes and it pays no attention to the wishes of the people. Liberal Governments, on the other hand, in general—there has been the odd exception but it is a very odd exception—have tended to fairness in the tax system. The record indicates that we, as a Party—and of course I do not claim to have been a member or supporter of any of the Governments in terms of being a supporter in this House in the past—but as a Party we

tend to have introduced very fair and reasonable tax changes, not the kind of unfair, regressive, harsh and improper measures that are contained in Bill C-20.

Mr. McDermid: What about Allan MacEachen?

Mr. Milliken: The Hon. Minister of State for Privatization refers to the former Minister of Finance, Mr. MacEachen. He was an excellent Minister of Finance, indeed there was a string of excellent Ministers of Finance under Liberal Governments. I would like to refer him to Mr. Benson whom his colleague from Cambridge was quoting a little while ago. He was one of my predecessors as Member for Kingston and the Islands and he presented excellent budgets in this House. No one has stood up here and dumped on those budgets to date. I know that the Conservative Party ranted and raved a bit at the time, but nowadays his budgets are held as reason and light compared with the leaky budgets we are getting from this Minister of Finance. Canadians never objected to the taxes imposed by Mr. Benson the way they have opposed the huge taxes that have been imposed by this Government, and Mr. Benson's budgets were occasionally balanced. He did not bring in a string of budgets over a five-year period that doubled the national debt and led to a complete breakdown of the financial management of the country.

In this Budget we are witnessing a complete failure of a Government to deal with the debt problem. Government Members keep talking about how much they are going to do about the national deficit but in fact they have done nothing, the reduction has been minimal. In fact, the deficit increased this year, and the Minister of State for Privatization knows that. All his pious posturing comes to nothing in this. He must realize that the largest tax increases are being made in this Budget and yet the reduction in the national debt is zero; it has gone up, very significantly up.

Mrs. Dobbie: No, no.

Mr. Milliken: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg South shakes her head. Obviously she does not read the Government's own figures because it is perfectly clear that the deficit was \$29 billion last year and it is \$32.5 billion this year according to the Minister of Finance. That is my recollection of the figures. I may be out a billion or two but not by much more than that.

Mr. McDermid: What's a billion to a Liberal?