

The Budget—Mr. Nielsen

Mr. Nielsen: He made a promise in Toronto, a five-point platform, that was shattered. He also made some very interesting speeches in the north during that campaign. One was made in Whitehorse and the other in Yellowknife. By coincidence, I just happen to have a transcript of the speech he made in Whitehorse on January 21, 1980, at a rally being held for the Yukon Liberal candidate.

Hon. members will recall that in the Crosbie budget of last December the taxation which was being suggested on fuels was confined to transportation fuels. There was no tax suggested in the Crosbie budget to be imposed on home heating fuels. Quite apart from the offsets in the form of energy tax credits which were contained in the budget, the defeat of which was engineered by our friends to the left, the Prime Minister on January 21, 1980, said in Whitehorse, and I quote his words:

The climate, more extreme than southern Canada, your communications, your transportation, are more difficult, and your costs are considerably higher than they are in the south, but what you need is a national government which is practical and which is sensible, that's consistent—and what you had with the Joe Clark government is a giant double-cross.

● (1640)

Those are strong words. And he goes on to say on what he bases his opinion:

The last thing you need in the north is an 18-cent per gallon tax on gasoline and on diesel and which I repeat will serve entirely to pay for that mortgage plan, and nowhere will that Joe Clark tax hurt more than here in the north, because under the energy plan every household here in Whitehorse—every household will be paying nearly five hundred dollars . . . more for home heating oil by 1982.

Those are the words of the Prime Minister. When he uttered them he knew full well that there was no tax on home heating fuel. So much for the integrity of the man who now occupies the highest office in this country. He deliberately, in public on a public platform, told a deliberate falsehood to the people of Yukon. It was reported in the press. And he has the gall, and I do not intend a pun on that word, to refer to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), the then prime minister, as being guilty of a double-cross.

We have the \$500 increase in Whitehorse now, and it is no thanks to the Crosbie budget, but thanks to a Prime Minister who deliberately lied to the people at that meeting in Whitehorse. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) was not here when I quoted from the speech of the Prime Minister. I am prepared to stand by those words because they are there in black and white.

A tax has been levied by this government which will double the heating bills of every household in Yukon. Indeed, it will double heating bills throughout this country. As the Prime Minister himself said in the speech from which I just quoted, it is more costly to live in the north. I have given out some of the costs of fuel oil in that part of the country.

There was another benefit to which the then minister of finance, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), agreed before the budget was defeated and before the necessary resolution could be brought in, and that was the introduction of further benefits to ease the burden of fuel consumers in

the more remote parts of the north. I believe it was yesterday that the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) challenged the Leader of the Opposition to prove that the new taxes on gas, oil and heating fuel will prove more costly to the consumer than those of the Clark budget. The issue has now become one of the credibility of the minister and the government.

I just alluded to the crumbling of the credibility of a Prime Minister who went into a public meeting and stated the things that he did, knowing full well that they were absolutely false. During the election campaign, the Liberal party promised not to raise the price of oil and gas to the consumer. That was the promise.

Mr. Evans: That is not true.

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that that is not true. It is true. The Liberals promised not to raise the price of gasoline in this country. That was their election promise. That was their whole campaign. The election promise was that prices would not rise.

Mr. Evans: That is not true.

Mr. Nielsen: They were just as deceitful then as they are in the wording of this budget which is just as craftily put together and just as full of guile. I repeat, the election promise was that gas and oil prices would not rise. Now enters the question of credibility. Beginning in January Canadian motorists and tourists will be paying 15 cents more for a gallon of gasoline. In 1981 Canadian householders will face fuel costs that are double those of last year. That is just a beginning. There is no question, in spite of the way the minister juggled the figures, that in 1982 and in 1983 across-the-board fuel costs will have surpassed those projected in the Crosbie budget. Let the hon. member for Ottawa Centre tell me that the very least that is true is that his party promised to hold prices below the price increases in the Crosbie budget. I see that he is nodding his head in the affirmative.

Mr. Evans: And the facts prove that that is correct.

Mr. Nielsen: The government went well beyond the Crosbie price proposals. The Minister of Finance indulged in what I believe is fiscal legerdemain to try to prove a point. In spite of his word and wonderful permutations and computations, the facts are there. The figures of the Crosbie budget are available. The hon. member for St. John's West went into them to some extent yesterday. Clearly, the Liberal government of today has not in any way adhered to its promise of holding prices down. The hon. member for St. John's West also reminded us yesterday of the famous promise made by the Prime Minister in Toronto, that spending would be held down.

Today, the government is following the same tortuous course it followed in wage and price controls by ramming down the throats of Canadians arbitrary constitutional provisions in spite of provincial resistance. The credibility of this government is in rags and tatters once again. It is no wonder. It is the same old bunch with no imagination, the same tired old bunch that has been over there for 12 years. They have no