

Agriculture

put \$50 billion into federal coffers. As Canadians we will all share a portion of that through automobile gas and home heating fuels, but 320,000 Canadian farmers will bear an inordinate share because the money which is coming in will be used for general purposes, not specific agricultural ones. Thus farmers will bear an extra burden in paying for their farm fuels, for their fertilizers, and for their chemicals. It is unfair to put that on the backs of 320,000 farmers. It should be a tax borne by the general population because the \$50 billion is being used for general purposes.

What has the Minister of Agriculture done? He travelled across the country bragging about how cheap food is. For a 21-item food basket he brags that Canadians spend \$55.58 as compared with \$135 in Japan. The Minister of Agriculture should not be going around the country bragging about cheap food because the cost of cheap food is that farmers dropped away one by one, in the dozens, and now in the tens of hundreds. This is the cost of cheap food. Surely it is not something for the minister to brag about. He should be travelling around speaking to city groups. He should be saying to them, "Folks, you have had cheap food. It has cost us enormously because we have lost many agricultural producers". Why is the Minister of Agriculture not doing that?

Mr. Whelan: I am doing that, and you know it.

Mr. Thacker: What is the Minister of Agriculture doing? I have read all his speeches. I do not see that in any of his speeches.

What is the Minister of Agriculture doing about the capital gains tax? He was elected on a promise of changing V-Day to 1974. They did not honour it. He is party to a white paper which claimed that now they will increase the tax to 100 per cent. We will know when the next budget comes out whether the Minister of Agriculture has any sway in cabinet at all. I do not think he does. It is very regrettable because the 320,000 farmers of Canada need a strong and influential spokesman on that side of the House. The Minister of Agriculture, I say with great respect, has lost that. What has he done with the capital gains tax?

Mr. Whelan: Over half of them are financially well off because they are in those good programs. No other country in the world—

Mr. Thacker: He has done absolutely nothing. Everyone who lives in cities, the urban citizens of the country, get their homes—and this is their major investment—totally free of capital gains tax. But the government is putting capital gains tax on farmers, the productive side of the country.

Mr. Whelan: Farm homes are tax free.

Mr. Thacker: They are not only taxing the gains. They are taxing capital because the increase in value does not have anything to do with the real gain. It is an inflationary gain. The government has let them down badly.

Mr. Evans: They have the lowest tax rate of any group in our society.

Mr. Thacker: The hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) should know better. Surely he wants to have his children fed.

May I call it ten o'clock?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. It being ten o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 589(11) the proceedings on this motion have now expired.

● (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

VIA RAIL—(A) ELIMINATION OF ATLANTIC LIMITED TRAIN SERVICE (B) REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET NEW BRUNSWICK REPRESENTATIVES

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, most of the applications for rail passenger abandonment during the past few years have been rejected by the Canadian Transport Commission, but the very people who have been unable to convince this impartial body of the merit of their arguments in favour of abandonment have apparently been able to convince the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) that it is a desirable step. The minister has cancelled one half of the rail passenger service in the maritime provinces. In doing so he has made a mockery of this government's commitment to the principle of regional development. The minister has bypassed the democratic process. He avoided Parliament by making this announcement after Parliament was adjourned by closure. He has refused to see municipal officials from southern New Brunswick whose communities are directly affected by this cutback. He has ignored his provincial counterparts, particularly the minister of transport in the province of New Brunswick.

The minister said he would account to the transport committee for his conduct and would give his reasons, but his colleagues and the minister will not permit the committee to sit until after the cruel deed is accomplished. This shabby charade written for the Minister of Transport by the madhatters in his department is most unlike the gracious gentleman we have come to know in this House.

I want to call upon every Member of Parliament from New Brunswick not to be content with comments made outside the House but to stand up in this House and oppose these severe