

Income Tax Act

growth and increase Canadian ownership and control. The Prime Minister indicated:

This party will not simply stand by and let the recession come... We will fight it and overcome it... A Liberal government would use every economic tool at its disposal to save Canadian jobs and to maintain Canadian growth.

In the year since that speech, the Prime Minister and his government have made no effort to use any economic tool at all to stave off recession. In fact the government did not bring down a budget until seven months after it had resumed office.

The Prime Minister's fourth commitment in the five-point plan was that he would head a national government which used its strength to realize the aspirations and economic potential of each of our provinces. He said that it would be a national government which builds up rather than tears down and that it would make the 1980s a decade of opportunity rather than a decade of doubt. In the one year since that promise, one resource sector in one part of our country is to be taxed to the detriment of that portion of the country. And we have a constitutional proposal before this Parliament which makes second-class citizens of all those individuals outside the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The Prime Minister gave the specific commitment that he would give each individual area and province the opportunity to develop and grow.

The fifth promise made by the Prime Minister was that his party would enhance the security of every individual by helping those who most needed assistance, and they endorsed the right of every Canadian to have a job. One year later we find that these pledges have not been kept and that the government has not even begun to put them into effect.

I wish to refer to our excise tax proposal of 18 cents per gallon of gas, as compared to what the government is doing. As hon. members will recall, we proposed that price increases would affect only those individuals actually using gasoline. This administration has imposed a refinery tax as well as a tax which applies not only to gasoline but also to home heating fuel. This means that individuals on low incomes will have to pay that tax without the benefit of an energy tax credit.

My party has done some research into the specific levels of gasoline costs. My colleague, the hon. member for Vegreville, put a question to the minister of energy on January 12 in which he indicated that gasoline costs had gone up by some 30 cents in a period of one year, after receiving a commitment from the Prime Minister during the 1980 election campaign that prices would not rise by any more than 14 cents a gallon. I have a number of quotes from retail and wholesale outlets in my constituency which indicate that the price has gone up by between 20 cents and 38.9 cents.

Canada is blessed with a great deal of natural resources and human potential. One cannot help but be saddened by the fact that the government is stifling that human potential and the development of our natural resources. It is my hope that the government will reflect on what it is doing and come forward with policies which will help the individual develop and which will allow us to develop the natural resources of the western provinces to the benefit of all Canadians.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak briefly on Bill C-54 with regard to the energy section, the effects of the budget, and the disastrous effect of the Liberal energy policy on the industry and the country as a whole. What is most disturbing is the attitude of the government, which has made it perfectly clear that it will keep us on this disastrous course. We are going to have to keep hammering away until we can get ministers to budge on the position they have taken.

● (1650)

I want to congratulate the hon. member for Pembina on his remarks. He certainly made one point very clear—never trust a Liberal.

I should like to comment on some correspondence we have received from the oil industry and the drilling industry in Canada about the very serious and damaging effects the Liberal energy policy has on them. I want to quote from a letter dated January 26 this year from the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada to the Prime Minister. The letter points out:

After three months of careful study we the members of the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada have concluded that the National Energy Program (NEP) will have disastrous consequences not only for our industry but for Canada's national goal of energy self-sufficiency and, indeed, the over-all economy.

We represent the Canadian owned and controlled independent segment of the oil and gas industry in our country.

I want to emphasize that I am talking about Canadian companies, Mr. Chairman, not multinationals or oil barons. We are talking about small Canadian companies that are being harassed and chased out of the country by Liberal policies.

The letter goes on:

We have no quarrel with the stated objectives of the NEP. We simply do not believe the program will achieve them; moreover, it will prove to be counter-productive to those objectives.

Every document, letter, magazine or newspaper I picked up has this same phrase, "counterproductive to those objectives". So we are going backwards under their ridiculous policy.

The letter continues:

In view of the far-reaching national and international implications of the NEP, we respectfully request that your government establish a special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to undertake a full examination of the impact and ramifications of the National Energy Program.

Again referring to the National Energy Program, the letter goes on to point out:

These implications include the health of the national economy, jobs in every part of Canada, the secure supply of oil over the immediate and longer term, our international trade and balance of payments, and the unity of the country. Indeed, as stated in the NEP itself, the program "will impinge... in almost every sphere of Canadian activity."

The activity seems to be taking place at the borders where trucks are lined up loaded with drilling equipment moving out of the country.

It was reported the other day that at Coutts, Alberta, there was a line-up of trucks of one mile long last week. The energy minister disputed this today, but we are getting pictures of