

I must tell the House in all sincerity that the cost recovery, the expenditure revenue ratio, is on a decline. The cost recovery in the air administration, for example, is 35 per cent. In the marine administration it is 26 per cent. In the surface administration it is 17 per cent; in CN Marine it is 19 per cent; in VIA it is 23 per cent; and in the coastguard it is 1 per cent. I am not suggesting for one minute that we can get 100 per cent cost recovery, nor would I ever strive for that. However, we must try to achieve efficiency, cut out waste, and find ways and means of doing the job more effectively. That is in the interest of the system, the nation, and Canadians as a whole.

The fourth challenge I see, Mr. Speaker, is for us to put in place a legislative and policy framework which will indeed reflect the realities of the 1980s and 1990s and meet the challenges of the 21st century. We have a National Transportation Act that was adopted in 1967. Times were different then. It has served us well, but we are functioning in a new environment. We are going to be charged with the task of responding to the transportation challenges, and of doing so in a flexible framework within which we can ensure that there is maximum opportunity for innovation and flexibility, and ensure that we get the best out of the effort and resources that we put into the system. I think that we will do that.

Canada has always responded to challenge. If there is anything unique about Canada in terms of its ability to address issues, it is that we have consistently resolved the transportation issues which have faced us. We have resolved many of our transportation impediments by working together in our own unique Canadian way. I think we have the expertise, abilities, know-how and technology to continue to stay one step ahead of other nations in transportation. I see this as a very major challenge and one which I look forward to.

I would like to discuss some of the elections commitments we have been talking about. The Liberals and the NDP did not have anything significant to say about transportation. As a matter of fact, I went to the Library of Parliament today to try to find out what was the Liberal and NDP policy on transportation. I drew a blank. On September 31 the *Globe and Mail* reported that the only Party that had anything to say about transportation was the Progressive Conservative Party. I find that very interesting.

Then I went a little deeper and got the Liberal agricultural policy which had a couple of very interesting commitments. One was that "a new Liberal Government is willing to consider both raising the 31.5 million tonne volume cap and lowering the safety net". The other one was that, as specified in the Western Grain Transportation Act, the federal Government has established a commission of inquiry under Judge Hall which is examining all matters pertaining to the method of payment which would be most conducive to agricultural development in Canada, and that the committee will report before March 31. That is the substance of the Liberal agricultural policy.

Let us go to the NDP. They really shifted during the course of the election campaign. They stood in this House and fought tooth and nail to maintain the Crow. But then they moved an

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amendment which, in effect, cancelled the Crow. This amendment concerned a safety net which in effect nullified the Crow statutory rate. The Hon. Member shakes his head. But at least the NDP are consistent. The position of the NDP during the election campaign was "we will continue to press for restoration of the statutory Crow rate and will fight any further increases in freight rates". That is quite a change. But as I said, at least the NDP are consistent.

• (1610)

I see that my time has come to an end, Mr. Speaker. I had hoped I would be able to get into some of the other issues such as VIA, the issue of trucking and changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act. Hopefully I can cover some of those in my responses to questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there questions or comments on the Hon. Minister's speech?

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I was not going to speak today—

An Hon. Member: And comment.

Ms. Copps: Excuse me, but the Finance minister should well be aware that in my question I have a certain period of time in which to build up to a crescendo.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: I was going to tell the Hon. Minister that I was not going to speak today. I was just going to sit back because I had heard the Hon. Minister was actually a very nice individual and had done his best when he was in opposition to provide constructive criticism. I heard not only the Minister but the former speaker on behalf of his Party state that they were unable to carry out the promises they had made during the election campaign. In his remarks, the Minister made some allusion to the fact that because of the situation and because the cupboard is bare—

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Question.

Ms. Copps: —they cannot go ahead and carry out their promises. My question to the minister is this. The Minister and his colleagues were fully aware of the situation leading into this last election. As a matter of fact, he may remember that his leader over-estimated the severity of the deficit situation by some \$2 billion, \$4 billion, or \$6 billion.

An Hon. Member: Which one?

Ms. Copps: Not Joe Clark, I mean the current Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). He over-estimated the severity of the deficit problem by \$2 billion, \$4 billion, or \$6 billion, depending upon which press report he happened to have read that morning.

Can the Minister tell us what has changed before and after September 4 to prevent you from telling the Canadian people here in the House today in a clear and lucid way just which of the promises you intend to break and which of the promises