

on this I will give some support to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) who has, I think, done a good job in bringing forward her jobs strategy—has been cut back by \$1 million in this Budget?

Mr. Orlikow: One hundred million dollars.

Mr. Langdon: This Minister speaks of farm issues. Why is it that he is not prepared to apologize to the farmers of Canada for breaking the Conservative promise of cutting all fuel taxes? Why is the Minister so proud of the white flag of surrender represented by this program to help farmers get out of farming when what farmers want to do is farm? What they looked for in this Budget was assistance to help them farm successfully, not just through a cutting of fuel taxes as promised but through a cut-back of interest rates, not just on FCC loans in special cases, but for all farmers facing all the credit crunches they face.

I would like to pose some of these specific questions. If I get answers, that will not increase my admiration for the Minister of Finance, but it might increase it for the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board.

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I want to give the Hon. Member an answer if it is conditional upon his admiration of me. First, the Hon. Member should know that a reduction in Government expenditures has been achieved. I believe, as the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell) correctly pointed out, it is about a three to one split; three in the area of reduction in Government expenditures and one as far as an increase in taxes. If the Hon. Member wants to look at the over-all effect since we have taken office, those are the figures he will come up with.

The Hon. Member talks about a 10-ton truck. He is exactly right. The 10-ton truck which is travelling towards the cliff is travelling at the rate at which the previous federal Government was increasing expenditures when we took over. The Minister of Finance has stopped that increase dead in its tracks. We should be thankful that he was able to do so. If the Hon. Member wants to use analogies, some of us as farmers have driven trucks a lot larger than 10 tons. It is more like a 50-ton truck in terms of expenditures which is heading us toward the cliff and taking us over to disaster.

● (1240)

The Hon. Member referred to the federal decrease in tax on farm fuels. Essentially we did what we said we would do. I see the Hon. Member shaking his head. If he looks at our agricultural platform in the last election campaign he will see that we talked about reducing the fuel tax by 21 cents per gallon. We have taken off 3 cents plus 1.8 cents per litre which amounts to over 21 cents per gallon. If we compare the tax being paid by ordinary Canadians at the gas pumps with the tax being paid by farmers, we find that we have taken off 4.8 cents per litre. I do not know how that works out, but it is certainly over 20 cents per gallon. Our policy in the election campaign was to reduce the tax on farm fuels by 21 cents. I see the Hon. Member's colleague from Manitoba in the Chamber. He

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should talk with him. There is an election going on in that province. He should also talk with the provincial Government in that province and ask it to do what was done by the provincial Governments in Saskatchewan and Alberta; that is, take off the provincial tax on fuels to further assist farmers. In terms of fulfilling our campaign commitment in that regard, we have done it. It has now been extended for an additional year. If the Hon. Member would care to read our campaign platform in the last federal election, he will find that we have lived up to our commitment with regard to the tax on farm fuels.

Mr. Binns: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer) mentioned the concern which the Government has shown for the tobacco industry. Of course that is important to my riding in Prince Edward Island where roughly 5 per cent of Canada's total tobacco crop is grown. This is one of the first times a Budget has been specific with regard to a commodity. We certainly appreciate the concern of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) for tobacco growers and the involvement of the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board on behalf of those producers. Could the Minister give us any further idea of what the Government might be willing to look at? Will the matter be considered further by a standing committee or a subcommittee? What kind of commitments is the Government willing to consider for the tobacco industry?

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's intervention. I have visited the Province of Prince Edward Island and now the grave concern of its tobacco growers. Even though the numbers are small, when one is involved, the concern is very real. I am not in a position to give the Hon. Member any information other than to say that I know there are ongoing consultations between the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and the tobacco growers of respective provinces. The good news is that it was recognized in the Budget. The Hon. Member can be assured that as a result there has been some impetus to ensure that some of those things happen. I know research has been done into alternate crops. For example, there was some consideration of peanuts in Delhi, but I am not sure that it worked out as they potentially thought it would.

In direct answer to the Hon. Member's question, I am not in a position to elaborate any more than I did in my very brief remarks on the fact that the Minister of Finance included special reference in the Budget to the very serious situation faced by tobacco growers across the country, in addition to the ones in his own riding.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister knows, in recent years the need of farmers for credit has been so great that many of them could not obtain loans from the Farm Credit Corporation and had to go to the commercial banks. The policy announced by the Government indicates that the FCC will be able to lend money to farmers at 6 per cent, and I understand that the program is only available to FCC clients. Many farmers—