

AGRICULTURE

IMPACT OF BUDGET CUTS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, the Budget shows that Canadian agriculture is both locked into an agreement with the United States and burdened with a Conservative Government for another four years.

The Budget provides a dismal preview of the future: \$100 million cut from the federal commitment to crop insurance; an end to branch line rehabilitation; an end to the interest-free component of cash advances; an end to commodity-based loans under the Farm Credit Corporation; elimination of the Dairy Special Export Program; termination of the At and East grain and flour rates; changes to the fuel tax rebate program.

In total there is more than \$200 million in cuts to agriculture. Meanwhile, farm debt remains at \$22 billion, farm asset values are falling, and borrowing money for seeding is very difficult with uncontrolled interest rates.

This Budget and the Government have been a disappointment to Canadian farmers.

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[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

ATTITUDE OF OPPOSITION

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, when the two Opposition Leaders refused to co-operate and allow the House to be recalled so that the Budget could be brought down because there had been a leak, they acted in a way that is entirely unacceptable to Canadians. Messrs. Turner and Broadbent preferred to let their own interests take precedence over those of the nation. If these two Leaders had hoped to form a government in the near future, they would never have acted so irresponsibly. They are both stepping down or about to step down as leaders of their political parties, but I maintain that they showed they were incapable of acting with the intellectual maturity Canadians had a right to expect.

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And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they left the House during the Budget speech. How childish can you get! Are we supposed to take these two parties seriously?

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[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

CUTS IN FUNDING

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 31 to point out the massive Budget cuts in spending in agriculture, the most important sector of this nation. The Government has chosen to attack the most vulnerable people in our economy and is attempting to justify these cuts on the basis of lowering the deficit, a deficit that was not cut but increased. Many of these cuts are to conform to the Government's commitments to the Free Trade Agreement. A few years ago we heard about "Sinc the slasher". He has nothing on "Mike the miser".

The Speech from the Throne stated that agriculture was a drain on the nation's treasury and the Government has slashed agriculture spending by almost \$400 million. It has slashed crop insurance by \$200 million, grain and flour transportation expenditures by \$60 million, rail branch line rehabilitation by \$48 million, grain and crop advance payment programs by \$54 million. The dairy farmers export program was slashed by \$12 million, their Dairy Commission expenditure by \$10 million and the much touted commodity based loan program of the Farm Credit Corporation was slashed by \$10 million. This program was entirely wiped out.

As a result of ending the farm fuel rebate tax in December, the Government will be adding another \$100 million to farm input costs in 1990, all of this at a time when farmers across Canada are already reeling from high interest costs.

This Budget has a very harsh impact on the agriculture industry in Canada.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

BUDGET CUT-BACKS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): In the Throne Speech, the Government said that it would not cut cultural spending. Today, we see substantial cutbacks in funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This is totally unacceptable.