

Committee Reports

They promises to revise Section 31 of the Income Tax Act. Those are the promises listed in the book of 338 Tory Promises. Incidentally, if you or anyone else out there wants a copy of that book all you have to do is write to my office, no stamp necessary, and I will gladly send you or anyone out there a copy of the book of 338 Tory Promises.

Now, let us go a little further. On September 27, 1984, a report was made by the Farm Credit Corporation stating very clearly that action was necessary by the Government to resolve the agricultural crisis. Not rhetoric, not promises; the election was over. No more promises. From that point on we needed action by Tories. I know that is contradictory in a way, but we did not get anything anyway. On September 27 the FCC released this booklet called *Farm Survey*. Let me read some of it to you. It says that in January, 1984, the total assets controlled by Canadian farmers amounted to \$116.3 billion. That was \$1.2 billion less than it was some three years earlier. In spite of the fact that the price of everything was going up, the price of farm land was going down. The value of the farmers' assets was under downward pressure because of a difficult economic situation. It said—

[Translation]

And I read here in one of the tables, that over a three-year period, the farmers' net value fell from \$99.8 billion to \$95.6 billion, a \$4.2 billion drop. This shows the kind of impact which the economic situation has had on farming.

And a little later, Mr. Speaker, in November, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) began slashing expenditures. Whom did they cut first? The rich? Not at all. Whom did they slash?

Mr. Lanthier: The Prime Minister and the Ministers.

Mr. Boudria: My colleague says the Prime Minister and the Minister. Not at all. The Prime Minister's Office was increasing by 157 per cent at the same time . . . Yes, 157 per cent. While they were cutting off \$6.2 million from the dairy industry program, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, in a single move the Prime Minister's expenses were increased, and the grants to Canadian farmers facing financial difficulty, which I just identified very clearly were reduced. Something like \$9.4 billion were slashed from the Department of Agriculture, which was providing very worthwhile services to farmers. What did the Tory Members do? They commended the Government. Is it possible to be that partisan, Mr. Speaker? The Tory Members commended the Government for cutting grants and subsidies to farmers.

[English]

The Tory Members of this House move around the place to sit behind cabinet Ministers. The surfers, as we affectionately call them, the people who came in with the tide and who will go out with the ebb-tide at the next election, why were they not speaking on that day? Why were they just sitting pretty behind cabinet Ministers trying to get themselves on camera? If they wanted to get themselves on camera why did they not

stand up and defend the interests of their voters? That is what they said they would do when they ran for office. No, the Tory Members did not do that.

● (1540)

Let me proceed. In January, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) allowed this particular document, *Tax Issues in Agriculture*, to be released. This particular document spoke of the fact that farmers were, in the Minister's view, not that badly off. The document indicated that the state of full-time farmers were relatively comparable to that of other sectors which included full and part-time workers, and that therefore they were all right. That kind of logic escapes me. Full-time farmers are compared to part-time workers and all kinds of other insignificant and ridiculous comparisons are made in this document. I would suggest that the Minister of Finance should have read it before he released it because his name appears on it.

In any case, the document to which I have just referred went to the people of Canada. I distributed 1,500 copies of it in my riding because I wanted the people of my riding to know what the Government was saying about farmers. Obviously this caused the Minister of Finance considerable embarrassment. He did not know what to do. After all, he had fallen into this trap. The Government House Leader decided that we would have a Standing Committee make recommendations that would serve two purposes. First, it would get the Minister of Finance out of trouble, and second, out of this we would create programs that would help out the farmers and the Government would be able to fulfil some of its campaign promises.

You recall, Mr. Speaker, the promises that I enumerated earlier. Some of them dealt with farm finance, Section 31 of the Income Tax Act, refinancing farmers in difficulty with the assistance of agri-bonds and, of course, the capital gains issue, as my colleague, the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), just reminded me of very eloquently.

The committee came up with recommendations which are listed in this report here. That is why we are here today. Just to remind Hon. Members, we are here to ask for concurrence in a report that was agreed to unanimously by a group of Members of Parliament who sat on a committee. These Members from the Conservative Party, the Party that I represent and the New Democratic Party worked very hard. Much of the partisan rhetoric was left aside so that Members could concentrate on agriculture. I must admit that upon occasion, I became frustrated in that process but, nevertheless, in the end we came out with a report which made eight recommendations, three of which dealt with the issues I raised only a moment ago, the amendment of Section 31 of the Income Tax Act to make it fair, refinancing schemes such as agri-bonds and the relieving of retiring farmers from the capital gains tax burden.

We have now settled what it is that we want to do today. All we want is to have the House concur in or agree with the fact that a Parliamentary Committee unanimously decided that