

Supply

and Marine transportation. I suggest it is significant to note the past actions of the Government and how the Minister in charge has been dealing with transportation in Canada.

It seems that the pattern of the Liberal Government in the past 15 years has been that just before an election it makes great promises of rebuilding, restructuring and job creation. However, once the election is over the next thing that happens is that the Government begins to impose cuts. The records will show that this has been the case. In 1981 the Minister promised action but then imposed a cut of \$1 billion and then another of \$2 billion. This situation has been repeated several times. The fact is that the present Government makes promises and then breaks them. I am sorry that there are so few Liberals in the House.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Minister is not here.

Mr. Gustafson: And the Minister is not here. I believe that the public is fed up with this kind of cheap politics. I can give examples of this, one of which occurred just two days ago. Our Leader stood in the House to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) whether he would put into place a formula in the Western Grain Stabilization, for which we have been asking for two years and which the Government has been promising for two years. Mark my words, the Liberal Government will play politics with the Western Grain Stabilization Program just as it has been playing politics with the transportation system.

I can give another example. Fuel is very important to transportation in agriculture. In as many elections as I can remember the Liberals have promised tax cuts on fuel before an election, but we know what happens after an election. To the contrary, the provincial government in Saskatchewan promised tax cuts on fuel for farmers and for the province as a whole. The day after Mr. Grant Devine was elected in the Province of Saskatchewan the provincial fuel tax was removed completely. That is just as he promised. That is the type of government responsibility that the taxpayers, the producers and other Canadians are looking for.

My main area of concern is Western Grain Transportation as it relates to the promises that were made just recently in Bill C-155. The Minister took it upon himself to remove one of the traditions of this country and bring in a new program. It is becoming quite evident that the Government's promise to deliver the goods for this program are not being met.

Let me quote from the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). Before doing so, I might say that the House of Canadians will remember, as western farmers do, that in a short period he put into place certain measures in grain transportation and rail development across western Canada that were absolutely remarkable, especially in the limited time he had to accomplish that. Let there be no suggestion that the job cannot be done.

Let me point out something else. The Conservative Party, which understands very well the plight of the western farmer and the importance of transportation, is dedicated to upgrading the system. Make no mistake about that. While the

Minister rose earlier today and said that the Conservatives are always dragging their feet in these areas, the absolute opposite is true. We want the upgrading and we want the direction, but we do not want false promises that are not kept. Politicking with this very important matter of grain transportation is unacceptable.

A news release of March 27, stated:

'The \$16.5 billion of investment and 375,000 jobs promised by the Liberal Government as a result of the Western Rail Expansion Program will not fully materialize' said Don Mazankowski, P.C. Spokesman on Transportation.

● (1610)

—the Minister of Transport and the railroads have admitted that the level of investment will be reduced.

Yesterday, April 5, the Hon. Member for Vegreville issued a press release indicating exactly what happened in committee that day. Let me read it into the record:

The federal government is betraying western farmers by permitting a \$4 billion drop in western rail investment—

Transport Canada officials appearing before the transport committee today confirmed that the railway investment will drop to \$12.5 billion over the next ten years, a 25 per cent reduction—

It would appear to me that the Government has made a move to increase freight rates to farmers and now makes a move to renege on its responsibilities concerning upgrading. Again and again in the House we heard about all the jobs this was going to create. I want to clarify once more that we on this side of the House are in favour of creating jobs.

With unemployment at the rate it is today we are absolutely against mismanagement and irresponsible spending on the part of the Government, such as the Government spending \$4 million advertising programs that are not taking place. Jobs certainly should be put in place. Production should go up. Something should happen as a result of those jobs and rail lines should be rehabilitated. But does this happen? No. I call this irresponsibility to a great degree. The producers, the farmers, are certainly concerned about the transportation of their grain. But freight rates are being increased. The Government has cut back and reneged on its promises, and it would only be fair to say, "let's cut freight rates". But we know such is not the case. What we have in transportation are more promises, more promises, and more promises, and neglect of obligations that many times seem written in stone. I suppose I am a novice Member having been here such a few years.

Mr. Deniger: Too long.

Mr. Gustafson: Someone says "too long". Maybe that is possible.

Before being elected to the House of Commons I sat on a rural council. When something was written into the minutes of that rural council you could pretty well count on it. There were no open envelopes for expenditure. A budget was brought down and when it came down the amount of money contained in it was the amount of money you spent. The amount was not doubled, nor was it tripled. What kind of responsibility would it be on the part of any rural or urban councillor to increase