

S. O. 31

Mr. Speaker, tradition is first of all the people. The Opposition Parties in acting as they did lost the sense of the most important of traditions, namely serving the welfare of the Canadian people.

But come to think of it, Mr. Speaker, can you lose what you do not already have?

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

TAX ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, during the election the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the part-time Minister of Agriculture promised that they were going to do something to help the tobacco farmers in my region. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture said:

Ottawa wants to send a strong signal to the industry that we're here to support the tobacco producers in their time of need and adjustment.

On at least three occasions I have stood in this House to remind this Government of its promises. I have asked for immediate implementation of the Redux Program and retroactive compensation for those who were forced out prior to the formulation of the present program. Not only has the Government delayed and ignored the problems of the tobacco industry, it is in this Budget trying to crucify them. It has proposed a tax increase of 52 per cent on cigarettes, the highest in history. In fact the \$4 increase on a 200 gram tin of fine cut equals a 161 per cent increase, and the additional \$1.30 in October equals a 212 per cent increase.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Mazankowski) has also given notice to Canadian farmers that all current agriculture programs will be reviewed. We on this side will not stand for that. We will stand up for the farmers of this country.

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• (1110)

THE BUDGET

LEAK OF DOCUMENT—REQUEST FOR PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, what the Government has tried to do in the last two days is not only offensive to the parliamentary traditions of this House, it is an offence to the personal privileges of every Canadian. Security has been breached and the public trust has been violated. What we have witnessed in the past two days is pure chicanery.

As the Government House Leader stated, this is not the time for political tactics or blatant displays of partisanship. The Government's handling of this issue undoubtedly will stand as one of the great travesties in parliamentary history.

Who knows the consequences of this leaked Budget? Who knows how many people had access to the information prior to its release, and for how long? The Government has set a very dangerous precedent for future Parliaments.

If the Government is to maintain and respect the integrity of this House, the Minister is at this time duty and honour bound to withdraw the Budget and set up a parliamentary inquiry to investigate. There is no other ethical alternative.

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RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY

ORTHODOX EASTER

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the fact that this is Easter Week for all Christian Orthodox churches. Today is Good Friday, which is being observed by millions of members of this religion world-wide.

I extend my best wishes, and I am sure those of other Hon. Members of the House, to all who are celebrating this occasion, which is one of the holiest days of the church calendar. Happy Easter to all!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

SUPPORT FOR ANNOUNCED MEASURES

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, this year in Regina and other parts of Saskatchewan it is expected that because of another potential drought, a slow-down in our economy, and near record low housing starts, that things may not be all that rosy. A get-tough type Budget, therefore, would not appear to be publicly acceptable.

However, I want to read a fax that I received today from Ken Gamble of Olson Regal Commercial Real Estate in Regina: "I wish to advise that the general consensus regarding the Budget, in my opinion and those clients I am in touch with, is that the correct measures are being taken and that the Hon. Michael Wilson's leadership at the Finance Department is needed in this country at this time. Good luck and best wishes in the days ahead".