

*Excise Tax Act*

many years. Many northern constituents live in rural areas and are forced to travel many more miles to obtain the necessities of life. Those who sit in Canada's capital do not seem to understand the problems of living in the north and the long distances one must travel to get from A to B, and yet they are continually trying to persuade southerners to relocate in the north.

**The letter continues:**

I fail to see how Mr. Turner's budget will accomplish his goals on conservation, unemployment and inflation. We in the north, while paying the highest prices for fuel oil to heat our homes, are already faced with longer and more severe winters than our city dwellers in southern Ontario. Therefore, I cannot see any incentive to those on unemployment and welfare to find work and join the working economy. When they take into consideration higher transportation costs to get to and from work, higher UIC premiums, and in the near future higher OHIP premiums, the incentive to work is lost!

Persons on fixed incomes (pensioners) are going to be particularly hard hit since, for the past few years, they have been struggling to literally exist in today's economy. It is rhetoric that government chooses to thank these people for contributing for years to Canada's GNP as "laying their lives on the line for their country" in the past wars.

Those with higher incomes will surely feel the "pinch", but they already have the moneys to cope with the new budget amendments.

My purpose in writing is that I would like to find out what Mr. Turner's interpretation of "pleasure driving" is. I fail to agree that driving to work (because of no public transportation) should be considered "pleasure" or has Mr. Turner ever jogged 20 miles to work and back in 30 degrees below zero (fahrenheit) weather? He should try it some time.

That is a letter from a person in Elliot Lake. It represents the feelings of many people in northern Ontario about this ten-cent a gasoline tax. I should like, now, to read from another letter which also illustrates the hardship this tax will put on people. This letter is from Laurence Shaw, a resident of my constituency of Sault Ste. Marie:

● (1630)

And then I think of all the disabled people in Canada who rely on their cars to get them to and from work and just to get them out of the house. How can they afford 80 cents and up for gas? Especially if they are on a disability pension. Its hard enough to live on a pension as it is. So thanks to this new brilliant budget, over half of the disabled people in Canada are going to be sitting at home in front of their window watching the world go by. They can't even afford to go out for a ride. I know, because I'm disabled and this budget has literally changed my life. I can no longer afford a car, and giving up that bit of independence is hard to do.

And so, Mr. Symes, I extend my congratulations to the government for this fantastic budget. Perhaps this will at least get some of the apathetic people of Canada to stand up and be counted. Something beneficial has to come out of this.

To that I say amen. This hypocritical government that poses as the champion of the working people, the disabled and the poor of this country, really is hitting them most unfairly by this kind of tax. Not one Liberal member has risen to oppose or even to defend this tax. There are other ways money might be raised rather than by the imposition of this excise tax. If the government were serious about conservation, other measures could be taken, such as the federal government pressing the provinces to reduce the speed limit to 55 miles an hour as has been done in the province of British Columbia.

The government could also put pressure on the auto industry to improve their automobile engines in order to bring about greater fuel economy. It could fulfil its election promise by providing better public transit in the cities and towns of our country. If this government were

serious about conservation, it could implement a national energy policy that would benefit Canadians in terms of supply and price, rather than leave us to the mercy of the pricing system of the multinational oil companies. If this government were serious about raising revenue in a non-discriminatory way, it would use the income tax system to gain extra revenue by taxing the corporations as they should have been taxed long ago, and by taxing other Canadians so that the gap would be lessened between the rich and the poor.

In this way, the government could help the people on low income and compensate them for the very heavy inflation from which this country is suffering. These measures would be much more realistic than this excise tax. The people of Canada are enraged and they are speaking up. The members of this party are prepared to sit here until the end of the month or as long as it takes to pound some sense into some of the Liberal backbenchers so they will stand up and put pressure on the Minister of Finance to rescind this most discriminatory and unfair tax.

**Mr. Alan Martin (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, I really had not intended to speak on this particular bill.

**An hon. Member:** Then sit down.

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the acknowledgement from the other side when I rise to speak: it is very encouraging. I rise in part, however to respond to the challenge that has been thrown out by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) and members of the official opposition. They have continually referred to the lack of activity on the part of Liberal backbenchers to get up to speak. If hon. members opposite are not aware of the 100 per cent support that exists among members of this party for the budget and the policies introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), they should be aware of it very soon. I wish to refer also to the comments of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) when he was waxing particularly eloquent.

I find it rather strange that these two members should be bedfellows in putting forward exactly the same viewpoint, but I suppose this is understandable when one realizes that they accept their responsibility simply to oppose anything put forward by this government, without carefully considering the measures and what they are intended to accomplish.

I think we should remember that the only reason we are looking at a potential ten-cent tax on gasoline today is a policy introduced by this government and supported by all parties on the other side of the House. I refer to the policy to create one-price gasoline for the whole of Canada, subject only to differences in transportation costs.

The cost of maintaining this particular system which, I reiterate, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton and the parties they represent so solemnly supported at the time, was to be met by a tax imposed on exports of Canadian crude oil from western Canada. We all know that these exports are now diminishing, for two main reasons. The first is that our own supplies of crude oil are not as great as was anticipated by the National Energy Board two years ago; in fact, they are much less. Second, we know that the United