

Excise Tax Act

on his own ticket and take his wife and children tax free. The same method could be used with students. It is ridiculous to allow a student to travel at the student rate from Halifax to take a law degree in Vancouver and then expect him to pay what I suggest is an exorbitant tax. Let us be consistent. People like students, old age pensioners and members of families could easily sign a form to exempt them from the tax when they pick up their tickets. At the end of the month the airline would merely have to calculate how many full fares and half fares they had collected, and pass on the tax to the government.

The minister should find these suggestions welcome. In any event I would ask him to let his colleagues know that we in this House are getting a little tired of the government bringing forward items of legislation for the consideration of the House, having already decided to accept no amendments. I am sure hon. members have noticed how few suggestions are made by government members.

If our proposals are not satisfactory, then we should be told why. If the government thinks students do not require special consideration, that old age pensioners do not require special consideration or that those in the north who are pioneering this country do not require special consideration, the government should explain its position. We on this side feel very strongly that these groups do require special consideration.

The mere excuse that something would be hard to police, or that the bureaucrats should not be expected to count noses, is no excuse at all. There are some 500,000 or 600,000 bureaucrats chasing each other around in circles in Canada; I suggest a few of them busy themselves trying to make sure the tax burden falls on the right shoulders. If that were the case, I would feel a great deal happier about the imposition of this tax.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Chairman, the minister is obviously batting on a very sticky wicket this afternoon. He has been asked a lot of questions and his answers have been somewhat vague. I cannot let this measure pass without raising objection to the imposition of this 5 per cent tax, since it will work its greatest hardship on people in areas that are already suffering from regional disparity.

As was quite well pointed out by my colleague the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate, the burden imposed by this tax on workers at Churchill Falls or those in the remote areas of Canada will be exceptionally great. What the minister has not yet told us is

how much money he hopes to raise by this measure, or how much money the government really needs. For example, I read in the November 24 issue of the *Financial Times* a statement to the effect that heavy expenses face our airport planners today; that initial cost estimates for the new St. Scholastique airport outside Montreal run to about \$400 million; that Toronto's new airport can be expected to cost about the same and that there are varying estimates for creating new ground facilities in other major centres.

If this tax is to be applied against the cost of the Montreal and Toronto airports, then I fail to see the logic of imposing additional taxation on those who live in the remote areas of Canada to pay for the construction of new and expanded facilities in what is really the golden horseshoe of Canada. In my own native province of Nova Scotia the people have been literally trying to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Since 1956, through the efforts of Industrial Estates, we have been able to encourage 60 or more new industries to locate in Nova Scotia.

● (5:10 p.m.)

These new industries must of necessity travel to the central areas of Canada in order to obtain the business needed to keep them growing and expanding. What the minister and the government are doing by imposing this tax on these industries is increasing their cost of doing business. I must raise objection to this measure because I think it is unfair and, to use a term that is much overworked, very unjust.

This measure will obviously place a heavier tax burden on industry than we have yet seen this session. I wonder what plans the minister has in respect of the air industry of Canada. Does he intend to expand airports in some of our remote areas, or is the money to be raised by this new imposition to be utilized only in Montreal and Toronto?

Will similar charges be made in respect of light, private club aircraft? We on this side can only look with trepidation at the attitude of this Government which, having taxed us to the limit to provide airport facilities, is now going to increase our taxes in order that Canadians may utilize the facilities. I believe that the government should withdraw this 5 per cent measure and consider making a flat charge on everyone across Canada who is using air services. This would seem to be a fairer means of distributing the cost of airport expansion. In the minister's reply I hope