

Excise Tax Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 81(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. David Orlikow (for Mr. de Jong) moved:

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-80, be amended in Clause 34 by striking out line 8 at page 46 and substituting the following therefor:

"January 1, 1988."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I represent an urban riding and I do not suppose I have more than about six or eight farmers in my constituency. However, one cannot live in a city like Winnipeg without realizing the importance of farmers to the economy of this country, particularly the economy of western Canada. There cannot be a Member of Parliament who is unaware of the great difficulties farmers have had in recent years. Partly because of drought, partly because of cold weather, partly because of the price they receive for their goods, and partly because their costs have gone up, more and more farmers have gone into bankruptcy. Many more than that have simply quietly closed up and sold out. Clause 34(4) says the following:

Where gasoline or diesel fuel has been sold in bulk by a registered vendor to

- (a) a qualified farmer for farming purposes,
- (b) a qualified fisherman for commercial fishing,
- (c) a qualified hunter for commercial hunting,
- (d) a qualified trapper for commercial trapping,
- (e) a qualified person for use in logging, or
- (f) a qualified person for use in mining, for the sole use of the purchaser and not for resale and the tax imposed . . . has been paid or is payable in respect of the gasoline or fuel, a fuel tax rebate in an amount calculated . . . shall . . . be paid to that registered vendor if he applies therefore within two years after he sold the gasoline or fuel.

Very often it is difficult to keep track of these things. So many of them are unable to make their claim for a refund within two years. Therefore, we are proposing that this clause be amended and the period for making a claim extended by one year. The date specified in the Bill would be changed from January 1, 1987, to January 1, 1988. It seems to me that this proposal should have the support of all Members of this House, including Members on the Government side.

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking in support of this amendment. Under the Excise Tax Act a repayment of the excise tax paid for gasoline and aviation fuel was available to certain purchasers who used the gasoline for specified purposes. Included among the categories of specialized users were the federal and provincial Governments, municipalities, farmers, hunters, trappers, certain commercial businesses, and public air transportation carriers. This measure is retained in part by virtue of Clause 26 and Clause 34 of the Bill. However, as of September 3, 1985, the amount of repayment is limited and the repayment measure is not extended to the newly taxed diesel and aviation fuels.

The amendment in Motion No. 12 extends for one year the expiration of the three cent a litre fuel tax rebate for fuel used for commercial purposes off public highways by farmers, fishermen, hunters, trappers, loggers and miners.

What we are dealing with to a certain extent is retroactive legislation, or at least legislation which gives commercial users very little time to adapt to what could be a substantial cost to their business. Whereas the Bill makes the change effective January 1, 1987, the amendment before us will make the change effective January 1, 1988. This seems more reasonable when one considers the impact on so many farmers, fishermen, hunters, trappers, loggers and miners who are not usually or necessarily the kind of people who have tremendous assets or are in a position to make provisions for sudden increased costs. Therefore, I hope the House will see fit to support this amendment which does not oppose the tax itself but does ask for a reasonable length of time to allow people to adjust to it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment briefly on Motion No. 12, which reads as follows:

That Bill C-80, be amended in Clause 34 by striking out line 8 at page 46 and substituting the following therefor:

"January 1, 1988."

So the purpose of the amendment is to extend the right of individuals who engage in fishing, trapping, logging and mining to deduct three cents per litre of fuel they use in these operations.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is only fair to allow these people, who up to now were entitled to a three-cent rebate per litre, to continue to enjoy this rebate for another year, that is, until 1988 at least, and as a result make their operations more profitable. And I am now thinking of a group I know well, I am referring to Ottawa Valley trappers in Calabogie, Arnprior and Renfrew—

[*English*]

—who earn their living mainly on trapping and tourists and a fuel rebate of three cents a litre is an important factor in their economic planning. I know that many of them have complained to me. I could give you names, but that is not necessary at this time. However, many of them have come to me and asked why the Government does not listen to them when they tell the Government that the rebate is important to them. They say it is important that they reduce their costs because they are under so much pressure. I am thinking of those in the trapping industry in the Ottawa valley who have seen their revenues decrease as a result of environmental concerns and the lobby which has been put up against their trade. In many cases this profession has been handed down for generations in the Ottawa valley. Third and fourth generations in the Ottawa valley have made a living on tourism, trapping and forestry operations. I know that mining is a very important component of the economy in the Calabogie area.

● (1220)

I plead with the Government to be responsive and understanding of the request that is made and to approve this extension of the rebate for another year.