

Excise Tax Act

The administration of this measure will be expensive. I understand that the government will spend \$3.5 million in administering the program. In addition, it will be an extra cost to farmers and fishermen when they apply for rebates and they will need to do a lot of extra work to apply for rebates. Farmers and fishermen will need to keep records of the amount of gasoline used which is eligible for rebate.

Considering our difficult economic position, and as the well-being of a large percentage of the Canadian public is involved, will the minister take a second look at this measure and do something constructive for the benefit of a very important sector of our community?

Mr. Yewchuk: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at the minister's apparent lack of concern. He said the program will cost 1 per cent to administer. I suggest that that \$3.5 million could be put to much better use in agriculture. It could help farmers who must pay inflated costs for farm machinery parts, and so on. I submit that the millions of dollars the government will waste can be put to much better use in society. People are taking money out of one pocket and the government is to put it back in another. I suggest that the program is wasteful and the \$3.5 million could be put to better use.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I was interested to note the minister's allusion to gasoline used off the highway. The province of Ontario did not levy tax on that gasoline, but now it does. I point out that some people drive diesel automobiles, and this bill will discriminate against them. At present when you pull up to the pump in a diesel automobile, you pay the provincial tax. If a trucker pays it, he is entitled to a rebate when he turns in his receipt. I understand that people driving diesel automobiles will pay one ten cents tax, and perhaps the other. This is discriminatory.

I know that an hon. member, after seeing a diesel automobile advertised in Montreal, said he intended to buy it this afternoon. As he is not in the House I presume he has bought it. He drives a lot and will save much money. I am not arguing against his interests, but it seems to me that if motor boats are exempt, diesel automobiles ought to be exempt also. There is no reason why those who pull up at the diesel pumps should not apply for an exemption. At present some are entitled to it, and others are not. It seems to me that we should not discriminate in our treatment of people. At present the bill discriminates against one group of people using diesel fuel, but not against another. How can the minister justify such different treatment in the same piece of legislation?

● (1520)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the hon. member that even though my eyes were not focusing on him, my ears were beamed in on what he had to say. He knows that. The difficulty with the diesel question is that 99 per cent of diesel oil is used commercially. Talking about administration costs, the cost of isolating that 1 per cent would be prohibitive. There is some merit in what the hon. member says, but there is no reasonable way of trying to isolate that. In that sense there is some discrimination. There is discrimination in favour of an owner of a small automobile as against the

owner of a larger automobile. That is my answer there. The personal use involved is just too small a percentage to allow us to administer it properly.

The Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Amendment (Mr. Towers) negatived: Yeas, 42; nays, 59.

The Chairman: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, the hon. member for Pontiac, the hon. member for York West, and the hon. member for Saint-Denis were included with this vote. If they were, they ought not to have been. They would have breached the rules of this House and they know it, particularly the hon. member for Pontiac because of his long years of service in this House.

Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Chairman, I hope I was counted because I was in the House. I refute categorically the allegations put forward by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman—

The Chairman: Before again recognizing the hon. member Grenville-Carleton, I should recognize the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Poulin: Mr. Chairman, it was very inappropriate of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton to comment on a vote after it was taken. That was against the rules and procedures of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Poulin: However, since he chose to name me and my constituency, I may say that I had come back into the House and I was behind the curtain, on the line. I stayed out. I honoured that commitment. I did not come across that line. It was petty and small for the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton to make that comment.

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, I simply want to make the same point. I thought that I moved in on time. There was some shouting from the other side at that point, and I looked to Your Honour for direction.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fleming: My name has gone into the record with the suggestion that I tried to act wrongly. I want to clear