

Excise Tax Act

age and low income people, and this the New Democratic Party finds totally unacceptable. But the snickering backbenchers in the Liberal party can say, "Oh well, we over here are dragging this out," and that is really acceptable to them. They will go on saying that for the next three or four years, and then they will trot out some cliché ridden progressive platform just before the next election and try to suck in the people of Canada. I hope that will not happen in 1978.

What could they have done? The Minister of Finance knows that only about six Liberals have dared to speak on this measure, and some of them have asked how else revenue could be raised. Well, we will tell them how to raise revenue: you put a special tax on upper income Canadians. For example, take all Canadians who earn \$20,000 or more a year and put a tax on them to get the money that we need to get the additional revenue. That might be a progressive measure, but it would not please all the upper income Canadians who not only vote for the Liberal party but who contribute financially to it. That party does not believe that we should try to redistribute income in this country, redistribute wealth. They like to bring in measures such as this measure and say it is all right for a \$6,000 a year income family to pay the same tax—which it will have to with this measure—as a family earning \$20,000, \$30,000 or \$50,000 a year. I repeat that the NDP rejects that approach to taxation.

If the government simply did not want to levy a special tax on upper income Canadians it could have taken it out of general revenue under the existing tax structure to which corporations contribute, and to which all of us contribute on a relatively progressive basis. That is another means it could have used. But no, it chose to levy a flat ten cents a gallon levy which hits disproportionately the average income Canadian.

We in this party have tried to prolong the debate in the House; there is no doubt about that and we make no apology for it. We believe that when an opposition party sees a piece of legislation which it believes to be rotten—as we do in this case—it has an obligation to dig in and fight. I say to you that 80 per cent of the members of our party have spoken in this debate. Of those who have not spoken, some are absent on other important business, and one or two are ill. So we have fulfilled what we regard as our serious political obligation in bringing to the people of Canada the fact, as we see it, that we have a totally unjust tax measure before us introduced by a totally unjust government.

We would like to continue this debate, if we had the support of the official opposition—as we had for a few days, and they vastly outnumber us—and if they had decided to stay in and fight then all of us together could have prolonged the debate and perhaps we could have got some changes from the government. Perhaps it would have backed down. But we have now concluded that, 80 per cent of our members having spoken, it would be pointless to extend further the second reading debate. Therefore we will let this measure proceed to the committee stage. At that stage we will propose some amendments that go to the heart of this measure, and we hope we will get the support of the official opposition.

[Mr. Broadbent.]

We have our doubts about the Minister of Finance, to understate the case by about 1,000 per cent, but we may get the support of the official opposition, and we will try to get some important changes made to the legislation at the committee stage.

I want to conclude by making a special appeal to the Minister of Finance. I want him to pretend that he is back in the days of the minority government. At that time he and some of his colleagues could move, if not an inch, at least two or three millimetres in a progressive direction. Let him pretend that his political life depends on moving incrementally toward a more just society in terms of the distribution of the economic burden in Canada. If he becomes so bound up in such a hallucination, he might agree during the committee stage to have all that voting fodder in the backbenches of the Liberal party agree to some sensible amendments, and if we get some sensible amendments to this measure, we may get a degree of economic justice for the people of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The question is on the motion in the name of the Minister of Finance. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton), which was agreed to on the following division:

● (2130)

(Division No. 64)

YEAS

Messrs.

Allmand	Caron	Foster
Andras	Chrétien	Fox
(Port Arthur)	Clermont	Francis
Appoloni (Mrs.)	Collenette	Gauthier
Baker	Comtois	(Ottawa-Vanier)
(Gander-Twillingate)	Corriveau	Gendron
Basford	Côté	Gillespie
Béchar	Cullen	Goyer
Bégin (Miss)	Cyr	Guilbault
Blais	Danson	Haidasz
Blaker	De Bané	Herbert
Blouin	Duclos	Holt (Mrs.)
Boulangier	Dupras	Hopkins
Breau	Duquet	Isabelle
Buchanan	Ethier	Jamieson
Cafik	Faulkner	Joyal
Campagnolo (Mrs.)	Fleming	Kaplan