

determination to add extra costs to the industries of Canada and the individual taxpayers? Why would they not settle for the lower cost of oil? Why did they insist on a higher price for oil and a higher ceiling than the province of Alberta was seeking?

In any event, that is what they have done. Alberta said 75 per cent and the Liberal government said, "Oh, no, Canadian industries and Canadian individuals can stand a higher price. Kick it up to 85 per cent." That is the comparison with wellhead prices. By 1983 under this budget those prices will be slightly higher than we proposed—55 cents a barrel. But that does not include the so-called Canadian ownership charge, the open-ended invitation to tax Canadians which this government is giving to a Crown corporation—Petro-Canada.

The minister's own officials talked in terms of a tax as high as \$4 a barrel. If that tax is used to that level over the next four years—and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if anyone in Canada has ever known this government not to use a tax to the legal maximum—then by 1983 MacEachen oil will cost \$4.55 a barrel more than Crosbie oil would have cost.

If you applied that, plus the proposed natural gas tax increases, to the average Canadian consumer, here is what you will find. By 1983, under our budget, the average consumer would have been paying \$983 more a year for heating oil and gasoline, with his or her net cost being \$763, if he or she qualified for the full energy tax credit. We proposed this tax credit to help low-income Canadians, and this government, because of its disinterest in low income Canadians, has written it out of its budget. In contrast, under this budget, by 1983 the average Canadian consumer will be paying \$1,100 more a year for heating oil and gasoline. That is \$337 more than he or she would have paid with our energy tax credit, and \$117 more than he or she would have paid even if he or she did not qualify for that tax credit.

Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. That is what the Liberal promise of lower energy costs means to Canada. To the Liberal party "lower" means "higher", "no controls" means "more controls" and "below \$4" means "above \$4". This is the party of duplicity. This is the party which, instead of dealing directly with the economic problems of this country and instead of dealing directly even with the energy and economic potential of this country, has chosen here to avoid those problems and to undermine and erode that potential.

This budget could have given Canada direction—it did not. It could have contributed to Canadian unity—it did the opposite. This budget could have moved this country toward energy self-sufficiency. Instead it is moving this country away from energy self-sufficiency and toward more activity by Canadian money and experts in other countries, toward a greater reliance by the people of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and the people of all of Canada upon the insecure sources of supply from OPEC nations. This budget could have helped low-income Canadians, as the Crosbie budget did. But this budget ignored low income Canadians. This budget could have been courageous and honest, because there is a majority

The Budget—Mr. Regan

government to back it up. Instead this budget is divisive and creates illusions for the people of Canada.

It is a budget which missed the opportunity to provide economic leadership for the country. It is a budget which will drive energy investment and energy expertise out of Canada and put Canadians back into the situation of relying more upon foreign sources of supply. These are foreign sources of petroleum which we cannot control. It is a budget which deserves rejection by this House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate I do so with some distress at the inaccurate statements made by the right hon. gentleman with reference to the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). I will turn to those in just a moment.

I say once again, as I have said in the past, that I have a very considerable respect for the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). In honesty, I cannot say that my respect has been heightened as a consequence of his remarks in the last few minutes. Indeed, his speech can only be characterized as a sour grapes speech based on the fact that they could not do it and it pains him terribly to see that someone else was able to bring in a successful budget, one which can help the economy and the people of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: The Minister of Finance, to whom the right hon. gentleman referred, has a most distinguished career with respect to helping the people behind him. Over the years in this House he has been known always to follow the high road of helping those who need help. He has done this for many years, long before the Leader of the Opposition himself was here. The sadness of the position of the right hon. gentleman opposite is that even though, in his heart of hearts he knew better, he caved in to the Baron of Water Street last November when he went along with the 18-cent excise tax on top of the oil price increases. He now conveniently and totally forgets this and does not mention it at any point in his comments when he compares the two budgets. Of course, that is a very convenient lapse of memory.

What distresses me most is that one would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have learned a new trick since last year. He is still trying to fool the people with last year's trick, which did not work then. Does he now feel he has perfected it to the point at which he is now going to con them and get them to change their minds, after this passage of time, by defending last year's budget which was rejected by the people across the country?

If the right hon. gentleman, who says that the budget was an energy statement and not a budget, had a better understanding of the connection between energy and the economy, he might still be in office.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!