

Excise Tax Act

for those travelling by air. One could repeat the suggestion that by and large it is the well-to-do element of our population which travels by air, and this is generally true if one ignores those areas of Canada wherein people have no alternate method of travel no matter how wealthy they are.

Let us consider the man who must take his children 200 miles to the dentist, as compared with the man who can get on a streetcar, travel by highway or by train: keeping this in mind, it should become apparent to hon. members that this Bill is not the answer to the problem of meeting the rising costs of air terminal facilities in Canada.

I was a member of the northern affairs committee which made the first trip across the Arctic. I understand the committee has made two or three visits since then. Anyone who has travelled across the Arctic is aware of the feeling of the people of the north regarding transportation costs.

I have listened to many statements made in this House by the minister which indicated it will be a long time before there is another avenue of transportation available to people who live and work in our northern areas. I see the hon. member for Fort William is in his seat. He was the chairman of the committee which first travelled across the north. I hope before this discussion ends he will confirm the truth of what I am saying. We heard one recurring theme regarding the opening of the north: it was in relation to the need for considering the high cost of transportation of goods and passengers in that area. In spite of that, what is this minister asking the House to do in this bill? He is asking us to add a flat rate increase of 5 per cent to the cost of travel for practically all those people who live in the 35 per cent to 40 per cent part of Canada which is north of the provinces.

● (4:00 p.m.)

We listened the other day to a discussion about constitutional development. There was a debate on it in the House. There are pros and cons in respect of that subject. This point has no direct connection with the subject matter of the bill, but I would point out that if the government intends to pursue this kind of direction in its taxing policies, the question of the constitutional development of the north is apt to become rather academic because no one will be able to afford to live north of the 60th parallel. These are the types of issue which appear in this bill which the minister thinks is a rather simple method of raising revenue in order to meet the rising cost of the

[Mr. Barnett.]

provision of airport facilities, terminal and otherwise, by the Department of Transport.

I could spend some time explaining that many people, certainly those in my constituency, receive from the Department of Transport very little in the way of services. I realize that the carriers are licensed by officials of the Department of Transport who presumably enforce the regulations to ensure that planes are safe, and so on. I am not denying that the operators and users of planes flying on class 3 routes around the coast do not receive some benefit from the operations of the Department of Transport. Those, however, are not the costs which have been referred to by supporters of the government; they mentioned the increased cost of major airport terminals.

Mr. Gray: On a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman, may I say that I said, not once but several times, that the yield of this tax is to be applied not simply to the cost of major terminals but to the whole range of services provided by the Department of Transport in the field of air transportation.

Mr. Barnett: I heard the minister say that. He said that terminals and other air travel facilities provided by the Department of Transport were to be covered. But the genesis of the idea of a user charge providing additional revenue was in a debate in this House about the rising cost of air terminal facilities. I am sure the minister was in the House when that discussion was taking place. It was not too long ago. If he does not believe me, let him consult *Hansard* or the president of the Canadian Transport Commission. I am sure the gist of what I am attempting to put before the House will be verified by Mr. Pickersgill.

Mr. Chairman, I was about to say I recognize that some of the services provided by the Department of Transport are for people who use class 3 licensed carrier routes, to take an example of one of the classes which is included. But by and large in my area, and over a large part of Canada, this type of plane flies under visual-flight rules. In most cases there are no terminal facilities. In some cases, so far as float-type planes are concerned, there are little docks which can be used by the public.

I see in the House the Solicitor General, who is a former minister of transport. He might recall my showing him one of these floats in my constituency when he opened a terminal at which jet aircraft have landed although it is not a jet aircraft terminal. There are some facilities provided, but I am