

*Excise Tax Act*

That is an organization representing 2.2 million people. That is what they had to say about this Budget. They said also that they found it unusual that since this Government had been elected, and we all remember that date, as unfortunate as it was, up until May 23 gas prices increased in this country by 18 cents a gallon.

Remember what happened to the Tories the last time they tried to increase gas prices by 18 cents a gallon? Remember what Canadians did to them? That is what they would do to them now if there was any way that we could have an election, but unfortunately we are stuck with them. When I say we I mean not only myself as an opposition Member but all Canadians are stuck with them for the next four years. Thank God time does go by fast, not fast enough, but we will be rid of them four years from now. That is what the Canadian Automobile Association had to say about the Tory Budget and specifically about the price increases we are talking about in Bill C-80.

The Canadian Federation of Municipalities also made representations to the national Liberal forum and here is what it had to say:

The largest part of increased municipal costs is due to the removal of the tax exempt status for asphalt and ready-mix concrete. Local Governments are the primary consumers of asphalt products in Canada.

Many Hon. Members on all sides of the House have had the opportunity to sit in municipal offices in the past. I have; I sat for three terms on Cumberland Township Councils. Once the mill rate is struck that is all the money there is for the current year. One cannot change the rate of municipal taxes once it is levied and one cannot deficit in an election year. In Ontario, this is an election year so what do the municipalities have to do? On May 23 most of them have struck their budget and have sent out their notices for municipal taxes. The municipalities have to cut back on projects, cut back on many things they want to do because this Government imposed those taxes, not on January 1 of next year so that municipalities, the largest consumers of asphalt and concrete, could plan ahead, but they did it right away, again a very regressive and completely idiotic measure on the part of the Government, which should have thought of this and subsequently modified its plan.

We also received testimony at the national Liberal forum on the Budget from the Retail Council of Canada, and again, the groups that I am enumerating here, are certainly not partisan groups.

**An Hon. Member:** Not much!

**Mr. Boudria:** They are non-partisan. I see the Hon. Member across seems to disagree. Let the record show that he does not think that the Canadian Automobile Association, the Federation of Municipalities and the Retail Council of Canada are non-partisan. Perhaps he thinks otherwise. I am sure that the membership of those organizations will be glad to hear his comments to that effect.

The Retail Council of Canada said:

The Council recognized that food and drugs could be exempted from increases and extension of the federal sales tax—

That is their view, Mr. Speaker. It said:

We regret the need to modify the personal income tax indexation provisions because we feel strongly that Government should not appear to benefit from inflation. We accept the need, at least on a temporary basis, until the deficit is under control.

They recognized that but at the same time they were saying that other things were unreasonable. They gave a balanced view but this group was quite adamant that some measures were wrong. Did the Government listen? No, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, I have two more issues I want to raise. The Association of Concerned Citizens for Preventive Medicine also addressed us, Mr. Speaker, and this group, a very worthwhile agency, a very good group, said to us that the actions of this Government in placing taxes on health care products was wrong-headed and it was to the detriment of good health care in this country. We saw the Government backtrack slightly on some of it but the issue was still strong.

Finally, I just want to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the very limited time that I have, unfortunately, to the fact that a large number of my constituents are quite concerned by the fact that this Government decided in the Budget of May 23 that UIC benefits and other pension benefits cannot be used to buy spousal Registered Retirement Savings Plans. This measure goes against the women of Canada. There are many instances of people using funds from pensions and the like to buy spousal Registered Retirement Savings Plans. This has now been disallowed. In the case of an older and younger partner in a marriage, it is important to be able to transfer those funds in order to benefit the younger person, most often the woman, who will be staying alone for many years after her husband has passed on. This measure is unfair and it is one about which many people from my constituency have written to complain.

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I shall be pleased to reply to the questions Hon. Members may wish to ask about my speech this afternoon.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Hudon).

**Mr. Hudon:** Mr. Speaker, I did not really intend to ask questions or make comments, but when I heard the Hon. Member talk about the price of oil and gasoline and the proposed increase of 18 cents a gallon, I felt that I had to remind him about what happened eight months later when his party regained power and by how much they increased taxes on gasoline in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the Hon. Member may have received letters from manufacturers or concrete processing firms, but generally, when a law or a regulation is changed, there can be some confusion during the transition period. However, I believe that people are satisfied and even quite