

The Budget—Mr. Jamieson

I was amazed today to hear the hon. member for York-Simcoe. Let him come to Newfoundland and say that it is a disgrace to have the people of Canada, the gas users, be required to pay this in order to maintain a price in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. I say shame on you.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That is a misrepresentation and you know it.

Mr. Jamieson: If it is a misrepresentation, then my ears are a lot worse than I think they are.

Mr. Stevens: You know I never said that.

Mr. Jamieson: I was about to go on to say, when the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) made the interjection, and I think the hon. member knows better, that I would not deliberately misrepresent—

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You did it inadvertently.

Mr. Jamieson: I am doing my best to be fair to the hon. member. Let me go back. The hon. member said that the consumers of gasoline in Canada should not be required to pay for a special consideration, privilege—I do not know what the word was—for the people of Quebec and the eastern provinces. I suggest that is essentially what he said. He went on to say that he would prefer to see it handled out of general revenue. I think that is the total quote.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That is better than the first time.

Mr. Jamieson: My friend did not give me a chance to finish the first time. I think hon. members who have been here as long as I have will know I have yet to be properly, fairly, or correctly accused of misrepresenting anyone in this House. I do not mind mixing in debate.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think if the record is checked it will be found that I used the word "inadvertent". I am prepared to say it may well have been inadvertent. I am also prepared to say in the terms of the first statement made by the minister, it was in fact a misrepresentation of the statement by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens). I am not suggesting that it was deliberate. I want the

minister to understand that. It was certainly inadvertent. If it was otherwise, I apologize to the minister.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I really do not require any apology. I know this is the sort of thing that goes on here. Perhaps it ought to go on a little more often. Before it is six o'clock, I want to finish one point with regard to the gasoline tax.

I think it is a misrepresentation, whoever makes it, to give the impression that, in some way or other, if it were not for the one-price policy, this tax would not have to be imposed. In other words, what it is doing is maintaining a one-price policy across eastern Canada, and not just for gasoline. Far more important, it is significantly holding down below the world prices fuel oil, industrial oils, and various products of that kind.

I could spend a good deal of time, if it were available, talking on the positive side, the conservation argument. What the Minister of Finance has done is apply the tax where there is the maximum amount of discretion in so far as usage is concerned. I have constituents who will suffer as a result of this tax. It is true there are people who have to use their automobiles when they do not have an alternative. Nevertheless, on balance it is a more proper way of doing it than to use the technique proposed opposite, namely, to do it through general taxation or something of that sort. I do not believe that would turn out to be anything as fair in the long run.

I have barely touched on some of the matters. I tried to convey my disappointment that the opposition, particularly the Progressive Conservatives, have not seen fit to come up with positive and tangible alternatives. I am sure there will be a detailed examination of those things said today. Perhaps we will hear other things during the budget debate. However, as things stand at the moment, I think their policy is in as much disarray as it was a year ago next week, when they were then, as they would be now, repudiated by the people of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): It being six o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At six o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.