

*Excise Tax Act*

other people to whom I have spoken throughout my riding. Perhaps their thoughts are best summarized in this quotation from a letter I have received from Mr. Hank Hoornenborg, who, by the way, would never be considered a leftist since he was the head of a local conservative organization and is President of the Chamber of Commerce in the town of Houston. Mr. Hoornenborg says:

The Houston Chamber proposes that efforts should be made to equalize fuel costs across the province. It is a well-known fact that because of the environment, distance and fewer opportunities, Canadian in northern areas make use of their automobiles to a larger extent. Because of often rigorous conditions of climate and roads they must purchase more costly vehicles and face higher maintenance costs and insurance premiums . . . Ottawa, we feel, must find a means by which to come to grips with the inequities Canadians in the north are constantly facing.

This land needs its northern residents, yet at the same time it penalizes these same people time and again for their willingness to withstand harsher conditions of life, and having the independence of mind to become personally involved in development of our nation.

Energy is such a basic commodity that the whole nation might well make it its responsibility to help carry the costs of energy expended in Canada's north.

Mr. Hoornenborg's point is a most important one, and it reflects accurately the concern felt not only by my constituents but by persons across Canada with the initiative to become personally involved in the development of our country instead of sitting back in the comfortable southern cities. In the light of the 10 cents a gallon we are now debating the ensure the continuation of an equitable and reasonable price for gasoline in all parts of our country, I suggest to hon. members that they give consideration to the extension of this equitable and reasonable price to the more northern areas of Canada as well as to the fortunate south.

I have been advised that, based on the total volume of gasoline sold in the province of British Columbia, it would require an over-all increase in price of only three-quarters of a cent per gallon to equalize the north-south differential in the price of gasoline in all parts of the province. Transposed into national figures and applied to the situation in northern Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan, northern Ontario, northern Quebec, and even northern Alberta, I am sure the cost would not be significantly different.

I leave this thought with hon. members and ask them to consider it if and when they return to their amenity-filled ridings in the comfortable south—ridings to which we will be welcomed back with questions.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mrs. Campagnolo:** I say to our outstanding Minister of Finance that, unlike the members of the Progressive Ostrich Party, my constituents accept the measures he is introducing in this legislation and accept the cost of ensuring that we have a strong and united country. When I vote for this bill and against the amendment I will do so knowing that this is another aspect of the price of being a federal nation, and in the full knowledge that ultimately northern disparities will be as visible as eastern energy disparities and that appropriately just action will be taken to share in larger measure the benefits of confederation from south to north as well as from sea to shining sea.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Cape Breton-The Sydneys who spoke last evening was soundly rebuked for referring to the previous speaker as "a delightful lady". I read her comments with regard to that. She was not, she insisted, a delightful lady, but a member of the House of Commons. So I thought I had better be careful about entering this debate immediately following her contribution.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Better not!

**Mr. Patterson:** I hear a comment from the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi. I have not heard him make any reasonable or decipherable statement since I have been here.

**An hon. Member:** You have not been listening.

**Mr. Patterson:** If we keep him here long enough maybe he will reach the point at which he is able to get up and make a reasonable contribution to these debates.

**An hon. Member:** Don't count on it.

**Mr. Patterson:** The hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo) told us there was sound and decisive leadership by the present government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Speaker, if there were sound and decisive leadership we should not be facing the massive problems we are facing in Canada at the present time.

With reference to her comments on certain individuals not wishing to do anything to solve these problems, I would only refer her to the fact that in several successive budgets the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) told us he was tackling some of our major problems in Canada, specifically, inflation and unemployment. I have heard him make that comment when introducing several budgets at various times. I also heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) state that he intended to wrestle inflation into the ground. Well, these problems are still with us and, whether the government has done anything at all or not, the fact remains that unemployment is still a major problem, that inflation is a gruelling problem, and that as far as the economy is concerned it is much worse than a great many Canadians realize.

We have been told that the policies being followed by the government are geared to tough times. If I may make an observation, it is that if we are experiencing tough times now they are nothing compared with those ahead of us unless the government does, in fact, show some decisive leadership and take appropriate action.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Patterson:** For a number of weeks we were waiting for the introduction of the budget. Time and time again we were advised that its presentation had been delayed. Finally he minister brought it down on June 23. I wonder why he waited so long. Was it because he could not make up his mind about what he wanted to do? Or did he wish to delay the budget to the point at which he felt the opposition would not be prepared to sit it out and debate