

*Excise Tax Act*

know that from time to time it can happen that when a bill is reprinted, technical or typographical errors are made, errors which make part of the language of the bill not intelligible. In the reprinted version of the bill is contained subparagraphs (a) to (f), whereas by virtue of the order for reprinting the bill, clause 5, containing the pertinent proposed new section, ought to contain only subclauses (a) to (e). I submit there is ample authority in Standing Order 84 to correct such typographical errors which do not conform to the obvious intent of a bill or document before the House. The error, obviously, is a typographical or a printing error. At least, I so view it. I submit that hon. members, surely, ought to be able to consider the bill as containing subclauses (a) to (e) and not (a) to (f). The hon. member for Peace River raised this point in his argument and indicated that he was not prepared to impede the progress of the bill.

● (1610)

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, I merely wish to correct a misapprehension. The House yesterday made no such order. I carefully perused the words. The only order that was made was one in which Your Honour directed that a clause be revoked and that the bill be reprinted. Beyond that there was no House order.

**Mr. Speaker:** I did not indicate that I had so ordered. I indicated that when I made the order, it was in contemplation that the House, not the government, had the power and authority to introduce amendments at the appropriate stage of the bill to bring the two in line. I leave it at that. I did not say that I had so ordered; I simply said I contemplated that an amendment would be introduced at the committee stage, or at the appropriate stage, and that is the language I used.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I simply wish to ask that you stand by the suggestion that it is a technical error, not a typographical one.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the events of the last few moments have indicated just how tortured this bill is and has become over a period of time, and how much over the next little while it will be torturing the Canadian public. Perhaps it is prophetic that it should happen at this particular time when the bill has undergone these events; perhaps it is an indication from the Almighty that the government ought to reconsider the bill.

I think it fair to say that the bad fortune this bill is having, and the difficult time the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) and certain members on the government side are having in swallowing this piece of legislation, was properly described in the *Globe and Mail* the day after the budget; it described as a cruel budget—and this particular bill is the cruellest of the bills which will flow from that budget. This is just one example of the bumbling and fumbling of the government. Another example took place earlier this afternoon when we witnessed the about-face of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald). He admitted that the government has bumped along, lurching

from crisis to crisis, putting off problems and not facing them. When they are forced to face them, they end up reversing themselves. This is what has happened in connection with the whole economic program of this government.

We find, now, the cost of living rising each month with jarring similarity. We find the price of food advancing—some 12 per cent projected by the Food Prices Review Board; this tax adding to the transportation costs of the country, adding to manufacturing costs in this country. We look at British Columbia and see half the work force out on strike, which is a blow to the institution of collective bargaining in this country. We look down east and see unemployment at a rate of 17 per cent in Newfoundland, and yesterday we heard that almost 12 per cent of the work force made up of people under the age of 25 is unemployed in this country.

Into this mess, caused by inflation in part but mostly caused by the government's failure to deal with inflation, is plumped this bill which by itself and according to the most conservative estimates will cause an increase of 1.5 points in the scale of inflation. It is a discriminatory bill, one which has not been defended by any member on the government side either inside or outside the House. The only man I can recall who had any defence for it was a member of the legislature in Ontario, the member for Carleton East, who thought it was a great bill. He is our secret weapon next time we face an election in that area. It is a bill which hits at everyone, regardless of income, in a way which can really hurt them. It is as regressive as a sales tax and it is a miserable, mean, dirty taxation measure.

**An hon. Member:** Right on!

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Not one member of that party over there, except the poor Minister of Finance, is prepared to defend it. The ten-cent a gallon tax is taxation which is laid upon the backs of a narrow group of Canadians lays upon them the burden of a national problem. In that sense it is wrong and discriminatory. It lays the burden on the backs of those who must use an automobile to get to work, who cannot get any financial advantage from the use of an automobile and who have no alternative by way of public transportation. That is the problem with respect to the bill.

It is because of the discriminatory and wrong principle which has been established by the bill before us that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), quite properly, moved the amendment which is before the House, an amendment which would cause the bill to be hoisted, taken off the backs of the people for whom it is right now becoming a burden. It would be taken off the backs of the tourist operators who are going to suffer, taken off the backs of those who have no alternative in terms of transportation. This amendment would allow the Canadian people and, more important, the government and the Minister of Finance, to reconsider the position in which they are asking the Canadian people to place themselves. That is the reason for the amendment, Mr. Speaker, and that is the reason we intend to oppose this iniquitous piece of legislation with all the strength we can muster.