

tax went mainly to PIP, plus a very expensive means for keeping an artificially low-priced crude and natural gas in the country. This is one of the main reasons that we have got into so many difficulties.

Mr. Axworthy: Did she say "artificially low-priced crude and natural gas"?

Mrs. Sparrow: Also I want to inform my colleague that oil and gas investments are up by some \$2 billion or more in the past year, that is, up by 25 per cent. This investment is creating thousands of new jobs across the country by stimulating exploration, an activity which creates energy security. The number of wells drilled is up by 23 per cent, and land sales are up by 73 per cent. Could I ask my colleague what he has against creating 25,000 new jobs directly related to the oil industry? What does he have against creating new jobs or new investment for the country?

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I thought the statement of the previous speaker was an excellent one. Her statement that the Liberal Government had kept the price of oil, gasoline and other fuel products artificially low during its term of office is astounding. It summarizes the position of the Conservative Party. There is no denying it; everyone in the House and in the country heard her say that during the Liberal regime of the last few years they kept the price of gasoline artificially low. That is a farce. Everyone knows what happened to the price of gasoline. Next to interest rates it is probably the worst thing that has happened to Canadians. I draw as a conclusion from what she said in her statement that the Conservatives would like to see the price of gasoline rise. They would like to see the profits of Imperial Oil continue to rise and sky-rocket as they have.

Mrs. Sparrow: Do you know about supply and demand?

Mr. Skelly: It is astounding. I have drawn from her statement the following conclusions—first, that the price of gasoline has been kept artificially low over the years and that the Conservatives will increase it; and, second, that they will not tax the windfall profits of oil companies from dramatically increased prices of oil and gas as a result of these incentives. Therefore, with fewer government revenues, services will have to be cut and it will basically be a disaster. I firmly believe that, and I think down deep she does as well.

Mrs. Sparrow: No.

Mr. Skelly: I think she is a little reluctant to speak out at this time. There is not that many of them speaking out against the direction of the Government, and the consequences are very serious. I had hoped that when she spoke we would have a situation where another Conservative was taking a more independent position in the interest of ordinary Canadians.

Mrs. Sparrow: You bet we are interested in ordinary Canadians.

Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax Act

Mr. Skelly: I cannot understand what they are taking which would affect their perception in such a way as to distort the facts concerning the 25,000 new jobs. It is the recovery which is going on in some areas of the country. It is happening in spite of the Conservatives, in spite of the Conservatives. There would likely be more jobs if the Conservatives would simply get out of the way and stop throwing obstructions in the way of development and expansion of employment. Only 38 per cent of Canadians believe the nonsense that was included in the statement of the previous speaker, who is simply repeating the nonsense of the Prime Minister. At any rate, thank you for your tolerance, Mr. Speaker.

● (1200)

Mr. Hawkes: It is amazing to sit in this Chamber year after year. There was an election sought in 1979 on the issue of taxation at the gas pump. Our Party proposed we increase taxation at the pump. We lost that election and we got the PGRT. Here is a member of the New Democratic Party supposedly standing up for the ordinary man.

Mr. Speaker, five years later, after having supported that program, he fails to understand that a tax which is levelled at the well-head, the PGRT, is a tax which works its way through the entire refining process. It shows up at the consumer level, not on gasoline that goes into a Cadillac, not exclusively on that. It shows up in the budget of every senior citizen in this country who has to heat his or her home.

He stands up here as if he were the champion of the downtrodden and those who cannot afford it. Well, he defeated a Budget that had taxation on gasoline so that those who drove a Cadillac paid more, those who drove a small car paid less, and those who drove no car paid nothing. His Party in turn came and supported the PGRT, which took money out of the pockets of senior citizens who they could not avoid paying it because they had to heat their homes. His Party turned down a tax credit that was to go to those same senior citizens that would have reduced costs for the poor segment of society. That is the kind of proposal that this Party has made time after time, year after year. It is working; the poor people in this society are better off today because we are the Government. The 500,000 who are working today are ordinary Canadians drawing an ordinary income, and they love it.

For the Hon. Member to speak with that kind of hypocrisy is almost more than this House should be required to bear.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hawkes: Let's get rid of the PGRT.

Mr. Skelly: We have seen over the last century people who have distorted history to fit their own needs. I have never heard a better example of it. The Hon. Member does not recall the Member from Alberta admitting after that particular election that he was wrong and saying: "Yes, I was wrong. I take full responsibility for the Budget and the foul-up and everything else". What happens is that the distortion is enormous. The man stood up after the election and said, "I