

*Energy*

they bring forward the energy tax credit as an alternative, but, at its best, the energy tax credit means \$80 a year. The guaranteed income supplement increase for the people who are being hurt the most and are least able to help themselves, as was admitted by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, means something in the range of \$480, and it is indexed so it will go up every year with the cost of living. It keeps its real protecting power.

In addition, hon. members seem to forget that this government and previous governments have brought in policies over time to ensure that Canadians who are least able to protect themselves from the ravages of inflation, are protected, and are protected in a very real way. There are indexed programs which have been brought in by governments, including our government, particularly previous Liberal governments. There is the guaranteed income supplement, old age security, veterans' allowances and pensions, family allowances, a child tax credit, Canada Pension Plan benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, federal contributions to the Canada Assistance Plan, as well as the personal income tax itself and the tax brackets within that system, all of which are indexed. It means that Canadians who receive these benefits, who happen to be the Canadians who are least able to help and protect themselves from the ravages of inflation, are protected, and they are protected as a matter of government policy. The Minister of Finance in his statement on Friday indicated there will be no pulling back from that protection which is provided to Canadians in those policies. He also said there will be no increase in government expenditure programs and no new expenditure programs. Like the hon. member for St. John's West, he believes the deficit should be brought down. He believes the only real way of protecting Canadians over the long run is to get inflation under control. This will bring interest rates down, it will put productivity back on track, it will increase savings and investment, and that is the way to get a country on track.

It seems to me that if hon. members opposite would concentrate on positive approaches to achieve those kinds of goals, helping the government by putting forward positive alternatives, rather than by putting forward a motion such as this, which really says nothing and is in fact contradictory within the policy of the party opposite, this House would be far better off and these debates would be more meaningful, not only to ourselves but to those Canadians who watch to see how their government is working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West):** Mr. Speaker, the difficulty with the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) is that he believes in nothing but whatever kind of subterfuge will get him and his party in power and keep them there. That is what this resolution today is about. It is about a betrayal of the Canadian people, the Canadian public. We condemn the government for unnecessarily burdening the consumer with high energy costs. Why does it do that? It does so because the high energy costs are not to help Canada's situation or help us to develop our oil and gas reserves or anything else. The high energy costs are government taxation. Of the 12 increases in the price of oil and gas since March, 1980, nine have been

increases in federal taxation only. We are condemning the government, not because it is increasing the price of oil in Canada so the producers, the provinces and those who own the resources can get the cash flow to go to the frontiers, the offshore, the heavy oils and the tar sands and develop them, since it is not doing that, but because of the 12 increases, despite what it promised in the election campaign, nine have been to fill federal tax coffers. That is what we condemn the government for.

What else do we condemn it for? We condemn the government because it has forgotten the consumer, particularly with respect to home heating oil prices without any relief for those least able to pay. Every one of those 12 increases is an increase in the price of heating oil which is particularly hard on the people of eastern Canada who buy heating oil to heat their homes using an oil furnace or an oil stove. Twelve times they have been crucified by the Minister of Finance who is from Cape Breton and promised them in the election campaign "vote Liberal and the price will stay down". That is what we condemn, the brazen cynicism that makes a solemn pledge to the people of the country and the minister's own region, "vote Liberal and the price will stay down" and then raise the price 12 times, every time raising the price of heating oil which hurts the lower income people of this country most.

We compare this with our own budget on which we were defeated. It proposed an 18-cent excise tax which did not apply at all to heating oil. It applied to transportation fuels and to transportation fuels only. We look at our own budget on which the government and the NDP together defeated us, and we see there an energy tax credit to help the Canadian consumer meet these increasing energy costs. Our increases in energy costs were not just all in the form of taxation to the federal government. They also included increases to the producers. We proposed these increases in stages over the next three or four years.

We also proposed an energy tax credit that this year would give the lower income people of Canada \$500 million, and \$1 billion next year. This would go to every family which earned up to \$21,380 a year. They would get the full energy tax credit. A family of four this year would get \$110 to help meet these costs, and \$220 next year, and so on ad infinitum.

In addition, we had a mortgage interest and property tax program that would have paid Canadian home owners this year \$1,245 billion and next year \$2,015 billion. This is what we mean by being concerned about the Canadian consumer, and that is what we would have done for them, but the hypocrites opposite and the hypocrites to our left in this House voted against that. They said that we were crucifying the Canadian people. They could not vote to support such a harsh regime as we had proposed in the budget, and then they get into office here based on those false promises, and they crucify Canadians with 12 increases, and they do not give one cent in mortgage interest or property tax support to the home owners of Canada despite the fantastic interest rates, 5 per cent higher than they were when we were in office, and they do not give one cent in assistance through an energy tax credit to lower