

*Excise Tax Act*

accomplishing it or not, we should be trying to accomplish a reduction in the size of engines on our highways.

No matter how much we may desire it, it is not possible to substitute public transportation for private transportation in many areas of Canada. In an area running from Montreal to Sault Ste. Marie live 50 per cent of the total Canadian population. There are many unsettled areas in that area as well, but there are great inequalities being worked on those who drive automobiles, and it seems to me that if in that large area one of our desires is to reduce the consumption of gasoline, we should be doing it by the reduction of engine sizes and certainly not providing a rebate on the large American automobiles imported into this country, as did the Ontario government. That is not the way to conserve energy. It would have been much better if this had not been done for American automobiles but for automobiles from other countries under a certain engine size. We would have conserved gasoline by this means, and also given some direction to the automobile industry in North America that it had better get into the swim and start producing smaller cars.

I am participating in this debate because the minister has indicated that the tax was taken off boats because of the influence of 57 hon. members and the extraordinary methods used by the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River. The minister indicated that this is why that tax was removed. I am sure the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River just bent his ear because he comes from an area where there are new mining communities like Ignace, where there are only trailer camps, where the town has not been able to grow to the extent of the mining community, and where people have to drive great distances. And knowing the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River I am sure that he has used those extraordinary methods in this instance to obtain a rebate on behalf of the workers in that area. I am sure the people from Ignace have told him that the cost of driving from a built up community to a mining community is excessive.

He is like the rest of us who do not receive too many requests from commercial enterprises. He may not have received too many requests from private enterprises, but he has probably received many requests for equality—not for any special concessions—for the working class who have to drive for business purposes. That is the only way of getting to work when public transportation is not available.

I am sure the minister has heard 57 requests. I hope that is the magic number, and I hope that he will give them some consideration if he cannot remove the ten cents tax. I imagine he cannot. I imagine the Cabinet has decided to stand firm, but if he cannot remove the ten cents increase, I hope he will at least make a concession for working people who are able to prove that they use their automobiles for travelling to their employment and returning home. I think this would assist many people in the areas beyond the golden horseshoe and the metropolitan areas of southern Canada.

I hope the minister will give some consideration to this forgotten group. It is always forgotten. I have been here 18 years, and requests were made before I came here—the request has been made perpetually—that some advantage be given to the working class in exemptions for tools and

[Mr. Peters.]

other concessions through the income tax structure and it was only very recently that this was done. I suggest that the minister will eventually provide this kind of gasoline tax exemption for the working class. They do not want this exemption for driving to church on Sunday. They do not want it for any frivolous reason.

In all those remote areas of northern Ontario, and particularly in my area, the automobile is not a luxury but a need. It is not something which is used like a boat with an outboard motor, or a ski-doo. It is not something used for recreational purposes or for pleasure. It is used in the course of work, and it is part of the worker's expense.

I hope when we go into committee the minister will take the very extraordinary step of providing, in addition to the exemptions which are now in effect, this exemption for the working class who are willing to provide vouchers endorsed by employers that in fact automobiles were used for transportation purposes in the course of work. Surely the minister will give consideration to granting that small concession for the working people of the country.

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

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Madam Speaker—

**Mrs. Holt:** Rosemary, where art thou?

**Mr. Broadbent:**—there is no other instrument of government policy which so adequately reveals the soul of a political party as does a budget, and there is really nothing like a Liberal budget in a majority government to reveal the health of the soul of the Liberal party. The budget brought in by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) shows, as nothing else could, in whose interests this government runs Canada, and against whose interests it runs the country.

There are three major parts of the budget, and I will come to the specific one we are dealing with tonight in just a moment. There is one profound change in the unemployment insurance regulations. One might say that some changes are needed in the unemployment insurance regulations, in the benefit provisions and the financing provisions. On that one might find certain points of agreement.

**Mrs. Holt:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Broadbent:** I invite the hon. member, who talks so much sitting down, to take part in this debate later on.

There was a time when there was an hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway—

**Mrs. Holt:** The opposition has only one woman over there.

**Mr. Broadbent:**—who provided not only sound but light, and I look forward to the day when that occurs again.

● (2110)

I was about to say that the unemployment insurance changes are entirely in the direction of placing an increased burden on the average and low income people, as is the case in respect of the excise tax we are debating