

*The Budget—Mr. F. Roy*

tends to be shocked. However, its members do not dare look at themselves in a mirror, they would be ashamed! Here is what the former finance minister, not the "blue" one but the "red" one, had to say:

It will also contribute significantly to energy conservation, an objective that I believe all Canadians support . . . To effect this objective, the special excise tax on gasoline—which is imposed at the manufacturer or importer level—will be refunded to all exempt users.

Some measures were announced in this regard. And, Mr. Speaker, if I go on reading, I see the then finance minister—I insist that he was a Liberal finance minister—said:

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative leader . . .

Because he was indeed attacking the official opposition—

. . . insisted that oil subsidies should not be funded through an excise tax on gasoline because it would be a source of grudges between eastern and western provinces.

● (1610)

But what is even more surprising—and here I think our Progressive Conservative colleagues will not applaud me, but perhaps the Liberals will—Mr. Stanfield, the then leader of the opposition, said, and I quote:

He recognizes that. So what does he do? He does not try to counter that. He sets out immediately to increase vastly the inflationary aspect of the increase in the cost of energy, recognizing that the increase in the price of oil and gas at the wellhead would be inflationary and would create some inflationary pressure . . . The minister said, however, that he could not give the House an estimate of how much gasoline would be conserved as a result.

The present minister did not do it either.

The ten cents tax—

It was ten cents at the time and they were mad, of course, as we would have been.

—will not aid the supply situation either. It will not encourage companies to go looking for oil or gas. It has nothing to do with easing the supply situation which the minister has always talked about in the past. When he was not blaming inflation or the weather or something that happened in the United States, he was emphasizing the importance of increasing supply in Canada. This ten cents per gallon tax on gasoline is not going to do anything to increase the supply of gasoline in Canada, and I am sure that the minister would not even make the argument that it might.

And further on, I am still quoting from the leader of the Progressive Conservative party, the then leader of the official opposition:

This ten-cent tax, being on a user basis, is very concentrated,—

It is strange how short our memory is.

—very visible, very stark in its effects on the consumer and taxpayer;—

That is a ten-cent tax, but they increase it to 25 cents.

—clearly its tendency will be to encourage the person on a wage or salary to push for a higher increase than might otherwise have been the case.

If a ten-cent tax prompts the taxpayers to ask for salary increases, how can a 25-cent tax not have the same effect? I should like to have an answer from the government side; since they have power, they must also have some knowledge.

[Mr. Roy (Beauce).]

It cannot have any other possible effect. This measure, being in no way conducive to restraint, will have a very clear and stark tendency in the opposite direction.

So the tax at the wholesale level is not just inflationary but it is also an increase in the cost of marketing the product.

A gasoline tax makes sense—

Listen to this one. This was said by the then leader of the opposition, and I am in complete agreement with him.

A gasoline tax makes sense as a road building tax in the hands of provinces. It makes sense if it is considered as a road user tax in the hands of provinces.

The Progressive Conservatives said this when they were in the opposition. They denounced a ten-cent tax, and now, five years later, when they are in power, they increase this tax to 25 cents. What logic! This is what we call consistency in politics. They follow the same old line and then wonder why taxpayers have all sorts of problems. There are many other things that I could quote, but since we shall not have the opportunity to bring up the subject again during the debate, I want to say that the motion introduced by the official opposition is inconsistent and insincere. It is hypocritical and aims only at deluding the population into believing that, after six months, they have seen enough to know exactly what to do.

Mr. Speaker, the truth must be told about the New Democratic Party. The NDP have also introduced a motion, not an amendment pure and simple, but a subamendment because our rules allow them to do so. For our part, we are not entitled to move an amendment or subamendment. Had we been able to do so and if the rules had allowed it, we would have proposed a subamendment and the three other parties would have joined forces against us because they refuse to strike at the root of evil and to tackle the basic problem.

And what does the New Democratic Party's motion say?

And this House unreservedly condemns the Government for its outright betrayal of its election promises to lower interest rates, to cut taxes, and to stimulate the growth of the Canadian economy, without a mandate from the Canadian people for such a reversal.

This is a non-confidence motion, no more and no less.

What is the New Democratic Party's proposal? What would they do, if they were the government, tomorrow morning?

Mr. Speaker, before I came to this House I always believed that the New Democratic Party was serious, but during the time I have been here, they have been attacking interest rates, inflation, unemployment, everything. But I still have to hear a positive proposal from them. Does that party believe only in carping instead of offering solutions? Frankly, this is rather disappointing. Fortunately our debates are televised, the people will be able to find out. I have not heard one single proposal from the New Democrats that would tell us what they would do if they were the government. Their approach is negative. They are physicians that know a disease when they see one, but are unable to cure it.