

**Mr. Towers:** Nevertheless, I should inform the hon. member that any speech from the Tory Party is always worth three or four from the NDP.

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

**Mr. Towers:** So when he takes that into consideration we are very far ahead of them in this debate. I have been quite interested in listening to the debate. For instance, the hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo) took an active part in it the other night. In referring to the hon. member for Skeena who came to the aid of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) as the sky was falling in on him and his empire was collapsing, we on this side were immediately aware of a romantic atmosphere created by that speech. It was noticeable that this romanticism gave an automatic lift to the Minister of Finance on to what is often referred to as cloud nine. While witnessing this I was reminded of a poem by Walter Scott:

O young Lochinvar is come out of the west  
Through all the wide border his steed was the best  
So faithful in love, so dauntless in war

To put it in other words:

From the west the member for Skeena did barge  
Saying ten cents a gallon is an acceptable charge  
She supported the minister, regardless of cost  
The voters in Skeena now really are lost  
Her romantic performance was all on her own  
Will 1978 see her topple from that throne?  
There ne'er was a knight like the young Lochinvar.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** That is worthy of Mark Rose.

**Mr. Towers:** Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the poem about Julius Caesar when Anthony was speaking and he said: "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him". I would suggest that I have come here to do neither one, certainly not to praise him for bringing in this legislation, and I would hope not to bury him because I have a tremendous fear that he is probably the best Minister of Finance the government has to offer. If we lost him it is hard to say exactly whom we would get. The others would be worse.

When I listened to his speech on the budget I was reminded of a comic I had read. It is Blondie and Dagwood. Dagwood said, "Blondie, we've got to start making sacrifices to save money." Blondie said, "You're right. From now on I'll give up my helicopter flying lessons". Dagwood says, "You never took helicopter flying lessons." But Blondie says, "See, I am saving us money already". This is what the Minister of Finance is doing when he is cutting back a billion dollars from his budget. This is a billion dollars he did not really know where he was cutting it back from, but he was cutting it back. One of the ironical parts of it all is the fact that if the time does come when that minister is no longer the Minister of Finance, he will no doubt be able to write a comic strip, and if members opposite find themselves without a minister of finance they can always get a comic writer to write them a budget.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** So what's new?

#### *Excise Tax Act*

**Mr. Towers:** This legislation is far too serious to joke about. It is really a serious matter when you consider what it is going to cost the Canadian consumer to finance this tax. We on this side intend to propose an amendment at the proper time and place, and I hope the Minister of Finance, along with his parliamentary secretary, will give it due consideration.

There were 326,804,000 gallons of dyed gasoline sold in Canada in 1973. To be processed through the system, the consumers will have to pay the tax and then file for reimbursement if eligible. This means that a tremendous cost burden will be placed on the economy of this country. I asked a question in the House of Commons of the Minister of Finance having to do with whether the financial system could bear this extra load. As reported at page 7164 of *Hansard* for July 2, I asked the minister:

● (1650)

Has provision been made in the money supply for the extra cash flow requirements of dealers and consumers for the ten cents a gallon gasoline tax or will there be a resulting shortfall in the cash requirements of other sectors of our economy?

The Minister of Finance replied:

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to be precise and brief in the question period on that particular question.

Then I asked this supplementary question:

Can the minister tell this House what the inflationary factor would amount to as a result of the ten cents per gallon tax on gasoline, not only of the tax itself, but also its administration and the extra costing of cash flow requirements to the distributing and consuming public?

It seems to me a senseless exercise for the manufacturers to collect this tax from the bulk dealers and for the bulk dealers in turn to collect it from the consumers. Some \$32,680,000 will be required per year to finance this tax in one way or another. If this cash flow turns over more quickly, say three months or so, I suggest it could be cut down, but it will certainly put a heavy strain on the economy of this country. This turnover of cash does not mean that the government will have extra money, in fact, it is going to cost the government money to handle collection of the tax and to rebate the same.

I hope that when the time comes to make an amendment, the Minister of Finance or his parliamentary secretary will give this matter serious consideration. The four western provinces and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have dyed gas, and if this question receives due consideration it will alleviate much of the problem of rebates in the rural parts of the country.

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I found the point made by the Conservative member who has just resumed his seat a very good one, but I am amazed that he only spent about five minutes on it. If he is so concerned about the unfairness of this tax, he should have carried on for his allotted 40 minutes. But as my hon. friend from Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) said earlier, the Conservatives are really not serious about fighting this most unfair and discriminatory ten cents a gallon gasoline tax on behalf of the consumers of this country.

Members of parliament have received many letters and complaints from their constituents about this ten cents tax on gasoline, provision for which is made in the current