

Excise

speaker on the other side of the House has spoken against items 11 and 12, and if the minister realizes that even government members are speaking against the imposition of this tax, especially members from British Columbia, he will see that there is every likelihood that the bill will be defeated in any case. So, if he wants to save energy he should tell the House that he will withdraw the two items, and the bill might then go through the House much quicker and save us a lot of time. I did want to ask the minister one question.

● (1510)

We had some discussion yesterday, while the bill was being debated, on two areas that are of great concern to me because I have many fishermen in my riding, and I also have the B.C. ferry landing in my riding. My concern is whether this bill applies to the British Columbia ferry system or whether it applies to fishermen, and I have been assured by the minister that this is not so. Will the parliamentary secretary confirm, so that we have it on the record, that these two areas are not affected, or does he wish to wait until the minister makes his statement?

Mr. Cullen: The minister will be commenting in a positive way when he makes his statement.

Mr. Reynolds: I thank the parliamentary secretary. I know the people in my riding will be very pleased that the commercial fisheries are not going to be affected. Hopefully the whole bill will be changed and no private boat owner will be affected either.

I would like to put a couple of things on the record. I think hon. members from both sides of the House have received a number of letters and telegrams from people who are very concerned about this bill. I would like to read some paragraphs from the Vancouver *Sun* on boating, written by Don Tyrell, as follows:

As an answer to the fuel crisis, it's a fake. The amount of fuel consumed by every power boat in Canada would amount to a fraction of one per cent of the nation's petroleum fuel. As far as the fuel crisis is concerned it's a non-action. It may serve as a talking point for the government, which can point to the steps it has taken to stop fuel waste by the boating public.

It appears that most boats, with the exception of car tops, will come under the new tax.

This means an additional 10 per cent on the boat and an additional 10 per cent on motors. There's bound to be some confusion for the dealers. A customer may buy a boat that is designed to take 20 or more horse power and use only a 10-horse. How does the dealer know whether the buyer is going to use a motor smaller than that for which the boat has been designed?

Somebody in Ottawa failed to think the thing out and, from the looks of it, very little thinking of any kind was done. One class of boat that will pose a problem is the inflatable. They have become popular in B.C. in the last few years and many of them are powered by motors of far less than their designed capacity. This is done because the smaller motors are not only cheaper but a lot lighter.

The only sensible way to cut down on fuel use, in my opinion, is to put a tax on the fuel itself. Then everybody pays according to the amount used. To single out one small Canadian industry for action of this kind is poor judgment.

I certainly agree with all the comments of Mr. Tyrell. I would also like to read into the record a letter from one of my constituents, signed by Mrs. Susan A. Molberg, dated January 2, and addressed to me.

[Mr. Reynolds.]

Dear Sir: A Happy New Year to you and your family.

This is a small thing but when a family saves for a large item such as a boat then when they go to pick it up have to be told that another 10 per cent is needed for complete payment, it really hurts.

We realize very strongly that boating is a luxury but on the other hand there is more to life than working from 8 to 10 hrs. or longer every day coming home, going to bed, and getting up returning to work week in and week out. One has to have a little relaxation and in this family it happens to be just about every aspect of water or boating there is.

I am sure there is more than one way to solve the fuel crisis and being a minority, that is referring to the sport of boating, isn't going to solve it all by itself.

We feel very strongly about this new excise tax on boats and engines and would like to see this tax *killed* . . .

Thank you for your time.

I wanted to read that because these people are just average constituents, and I represent an area that has as many boats as any other area of this country. My area includes the Fraser River and Boundary Bay, great sport fishing areas. The people in my riding are concerned about this tax, as are the constituents of other hon. members from British Columbia. I cannot understand why the government wishes to attack them, especially when it is wasting money in so many other areas.

An hon. Member: Your constituents are westerners.

Mr. Reynolds: My constituents are concerned since this tax seems to be aimed at the people of British Columbia, because this is one area in this country where we have the use of our boats 12 months of the year, while the rest of the country is frozen solid. The government is imposing a tax on the people of British Columbia who will have to pay more than anyone else in Canada. I see the minister is laughing, but he has lived in B.C. and he knows that we go salmon fishing in October, November, December and all year round. That cannot be done in any other area except perhaps in the Maritimes, although the Atlantic gets a lot colder and is not as kind to people because it is wide open and not like our inland waterways.

The minister says that the government is going to collect \$34 million. That \$34 million could be collected much more quickly without affecting the average citizen, and especially the citizen who likes to boat for relaxation, by restricting some of the government areas of spending. The Department of Supply and Services bought \$54 million worth of computers of which at the present time only 50 per cent are in use. If the minister spent more time looking at some of the purchases the government is making he might save this country much money. I know that that is not his responsibility, but he is the Minister of Finance.

Recently mention was made of the Prime Minister's car and it uses large quantities of gas. A second one was purchased for \$84,000. The President of the United States, who I am sure deserves a comparable car to our Prime Minister's, leases his cars and drives a brand new Ford. It has all the security devices that our Prime Minister's car has, yet he only pays \$12,000 a year for his car. He puts out a tender for leasing to all the major manufacturers. If the minister were interested in putting more money in the till, he should be going after his friend, the Minister of Supply and Services. We would like to know why the government is spending \$84,000 buying a car when it could be leased