

800,000 to one million unemployed persons. Although we are speaking of statistics here, we must remember we are also speaking about human beings. The situation is a human tragedy and the budget that we are debating does not do one blessed thing for these people. In fact, the effect of this budget will be to create even more unemployment. We should be doing everything possible to create thousands of new jobs.

May I mention one other matter of which I am sure the minister is aware. He had no trouble whatever in tacking on this ten cents tax, and lo and behold it greeted us about one minute after midnight on June 23. A good many dealers took advantage of it and made a few extra bucks on the side by putting the ten cents on right away. But what about the poor businessman and others who want this money back as soon as possible, money to which they are entitled?

I know we will be told that this legislation will provide for the repayment of this tax, but last weekend when I got home I received a telephone call from a farmer. Although it is only a small amount, he had to buy 200 gallons of gas for his farm. This is money that he has tied up. There is not a heck of a lot of money involved, but nevertheless he wants to know when he will get it back. I told him I was hoping to have the opportunity of saying a word or two on the excise tax some time this week, and that I would certainly try and get an answer for him regarding when it would be possible to get the money back. Then in the mail today I received a letter from Muskoka Containerized Services Ltd., of Bracebridge, Ontario. The letter reads:

● (1650)

Dear Mr. Darling:

I believe the enclosed letter is self-explanatory.

Rather than writing me or writing the minister, this firm wrote a letter to the great Liberal paper, the *Toronto Star*.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Darling: I am glad to hear that it is not as Liberal as I thought. In any event, it is certainly a newspaper with a reasonable amount of coverage.

An hon. Member: How about the *Forester*?

Mr. Darling: There is nothing wrong with the Huntsville *Forester*, just as there is nothing wrong with any of the six weeklies in my riding. That one is one of the finest in the whole country, let me tell you. Anyway, this letter should certainly be put on the record, and hopefully the minister will be able to answer some of its questions. It is addressed to the editor of the *Toronto Star* and reads:

Our federal bureaucracy is wonderful—isn't it?

We operate a trucking business and were recently charged an additional ten cents per gallon to cover the new federal excise tax on gasoline. It was my understanding that commercial firms were not to be charged this tax; however, it is being charged. In this case it amounts to \$180 per tank load!

On Monday, June 30th, I phoned the toll free number for Revenue Canada—

That is Hon. Ron Basford and company. The letter goes on:

Excise Tax Act

—to enquire about this taxation. They gave me a number to call in Toronto. I then made a long distance call to Toronto and talked to a gentleman at Revenue Canada who gave me another number to call at the excise branch. The switchboard said the "office" lines were busy so I left my name and number and waited for them to return the call.

By Friday, July 4th, they had not returned the call so I, in turn, called them.

None of the gentlemen I talked with could tell me anything except that they were awaiting instructions from Ottawa! A gentleman from the Excise Tax Department said that they expected that within the next one to two months they would get some guidelines from Ottawa—

Maybe they are being optimistic in that regard. The letter continues:

—as to how this tax money was to be refunded to commercial firms. He advised me to keep the receipts for the gallons purchased, but he couldn't tell me when this money would be refunded nor what department would be handling this refund!

Surely, Mr. Speaker, this should be set up now so that this information will be available even though these people are not going to get their money back for some time. The letter continues as follows:

It simply amazes me that the government can force the oil companies to collect an additional ten cents per gallon and not be able to tell me when this (supposedly refundable) tax will be refunded! Can you imagine how much money will be involved in the government offices interest-free if every commercial firm in Canada does not get this refund for the next year or so?

I hope it will be paid before then, Mr. Speaker. The letter then states:

It seems to be another example of the federal government's rules which are put into effect long before proper procedures and policies are instituted. My only question to the Minister of Revenue is as follows:

When is my money to be refunded?

As I said at the start of the letter—isn't our federal bureaucracy wonderful?

This is just another case which points out why this tax is unfair. The people do not know when they are going to get this money back. The people who are entitled to some assistance in this regard are persons who drive to and from work, but they will get nothing back at all. Many of them do not make enough to pay income tax, yet they have to drive from 40 to 50 miles to work. I speak with some knowledge of the situation in my riding, which I am sure is the case in many other rural areas of the country. People living all over the riding have to drive considerable distances to get to work. They are the people who are being hardest hit.

The hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge pointed out that in the minister's view this was a good tax in that it provided revenue but, like certain things that are good, it hurts. This is even worse than a dose of castor oil. I remember, when I was a kid, that was the most terrible thing that ever happened, but at least it was supposed to get some good results. I do not think this ten-cent tax is getting any good results other than what the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge said. It certainly did get some good results in Manitoba, and I would not be surprised if it got some good results in Ontario in the fall.