

prepared to let the governor in council do the same thing for workers and determine what it means to use a car to get to and from a place of employment.

● (2040)

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I place this amendment before the committee. It deals, as I have already said, with the most offensive part of the bill. I strongly urge the minister to consider it favorably. He has already exempted a great many persons from paying the tax by making it possible for them to get rebates. In fairness and in justice, he should go this step further and make the exemption from this tax available to persons who have to use their cars for the purpose of getting to work. I am not asking for pleasure travel or for all the other uses ordinary people make of their cars to be exempted, but surely this is something that is fair and just and ought to appeal to the sense of fairness and justice that I trust the minister possesses.

I should like to anticipate another argument that might arise by suggesting that in procedural terms it is similar to the amendment moved the other day by the hon. member for Red Deer. It is a reduction of the tax. It is less than is asked for in the ways and means motion and, therefore, is in order. I trust that the committee, with a sense of fair play and a sense of regard for the rights of hundreds of thousands of workers in this country who have to use their cars to get to work, will accept this amendment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Chairman: Before putting the amendment, I would point out to the committee that from a point of procedural purity, it is somewhat irregular to reach back into an amended clause. However, the Chair has been advised that, prior to the time the minister moved his amendment, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre indicated he would have a further amendment. That being done with the agreement of the committee, the Chair will rule that the amendment is in order.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I certainly hope the minister will accept this amendment. It has been pointed out by a number of members in this debate that one of the unfortunate factors is that workers in many parts of Canada are not served by public transportation. They do not use their cars for luxury purposes, but in order to maintain employment.

If this amendment is not accepted, there will be an odd situation in my area. Mr. Chairman, there seems to be a lot of people here who are not interested in the ordinary workers in Canada. If they are only here for the purpose of a vote, they should step behind the curtain for a few minutes because there are a few members interested in the working people.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: My friend may not have workers in his constituency. They may all be very rich. Of course, he represents an area in Montreal where the federal government is assisting in public transportation to a great degree. However, I hope he will keep quiet while we make

representations on behalf of other areas of Canada which do not fit into that category.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peters: I wish to give an example of what happens in my area. A contractor in New Liskeard who works in the Sherman mine in Timagami, 60 miles away, who uses his truck to transport his employees would be able to apply for a rebate for his transportation costs. Many other workers in the mine must drive their own vehicles because there is no public transportation. They would be penalized. A normal vehicle gets about 20 miles to the gallon. This means that for the 120 mile trip, the extra cost would be 60 cents.

The minister said he did not want the commercial entrepreneurs attaching the increased cost to the price of the end product. I suggest that no matter how it is done, it will be attached to the price of the end product because the workers will demand a transportation grant from their employer. This is a hardship they had not anticipated and which their wages will not cover. I suggest the minister is much better protected in this clause than in any other.

A private businessman, company, farmer or fisherman will make the declaration without any supporting evidence. It would not be difficult for the Minister of National Revenue to ask a company employing such a person as I have mentioned submit additional evidence to support the application for rebate. This is not possible in any of the other categories. I hope the minister will give some consideration to giving these workers parity with contractors as they work in exactly the same place and travel the same distance. However, they are not self-employed in the sense of being contractors rather than employees.

For years I worked in the mining field. There were segments of the underground employment, particularly shaftmen and sometimes driftmen, who were in effect operating on a private contract. In my opinion, they were doing the same work as some of the employees of the mine. These men worked on a contract basis rather than being permanently employed. I suggest that the clause as presently worded is very unfair. Those who live in downtown Montreal or Toronto have an alternative mode of transportation. In fact, it would be to everyone's advantage if they did not drive their cars to work. They should all be using public transportation. If they did that, this would also reduce the cost of public transportation. I submit that increased public transport facilities will induce more people to use the service. We want to see increased service provided in northern Ontario, but we realize that it will not come about for many years.

● (2050)

Those who are employed in the remoter areas of Canada must often travel considerable distances to work. Perhaps the Minister of Finance knows that people no longer live on mining properties. Ontario passed a good law prohibiting the existence of townsites on mining properties. I think there are no more company towns on minesites, at least in Ontario. Services and facilities are now provided in areas some distance away from mines. I am thinking of the Kirkland Lake Community, and of other, similar com-