

government. Right across the country they are saying they are doing much work for nothing because the government is imposing this and that, and requiring forms. These people are spending much of their time doing work which does not increase their income one cent, but it adds to their cost of operation.

If this tax is not for conservation, the government says it is to subsidize the price of gasoline. My leader and my colleagues have already placed our position on the record. While all parties have agreed that there should be one price for gasoline across the country, there are different ways in which this can be done.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** How would you do it?

**Mr. Patterson:** We have equalization taxes. Western Canadians are saying that they are already paying millions of dollars to equalization funds, and they are not complaining, but this is something which should be borne by all taxpayers and by society as a whole instead of having the burden of responsibility placed upon those who must use their automobiles for transportation in order to make a living.

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

**Mr. Patterson:** If the minister wants more money, why does he not cancel, for example, Information Canada?

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

**Mr. Patterson:** If he wants to save money and use it for other purposes, why in the world is he trying to set up Petro-Can?

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

**Mr. Patterson:** I believe he knows as well as anyone else that private enterprise can operate a business better than can a government.

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

**Mr. Patterson:** What about the continued growth in the public service, in spite of the fact that the government says it will reduce it or hold the line? What about unemployment insurance deficits? The government claims it will solve the unemployment problem, but it is because of government policies that unemployment rates are as high as they are. This is another problem the government has created, and for which it is now seeking some solution.

The amendment introduced by my leader certainly should be seriously considered by the government.

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

**Mr. Patterson:** The hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo) said that we do not want to make any decisions, and that we do not want to do anything; but we do not want to impose a further burden upon the working people of this country. We do not want to impose a further burden upon those who thought they would be able to enjoy their leisure years travelling around and seeing Canada, beautiful as it is. It is because we do want to do something that we believe the government ought to accept

*Excise Tax Act*

this amendment, give this bill at least a six months' hoist, and take another look at it.

Perhaps the government can come up with some measure which is far more reasonable and far more equitable as far as the whole nation is concerned.

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

● (2140)

**Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant):** Madam Speaker, we have had one or two rather interesting speeches this evening.

**Mr. Cullen:** Two out of three is not bad!

**Mr. Blackburn:** I heard, for the first time, the hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo), who left me with the distinct impression that most of the poverty in this country is in northern Canada. There is no doubt that in northern Canada a great many people are suffering, principally because of the policies of the government.

We are speaking about Bill C-66 tonight. I do not know why people have to be penalized in their pocketbooks if they go to the riding of Skeena to live, or go to the Northwest Territories, or the Yukon, or northern Ontario, or any other part of northern Canada. I do not know why they have to be penalized to help develop the frontiers of this country. Yet the hon. member for Skeena, while she was very sincere in her remarks and said she was not happy with the 10 cents per gallon increase in the price of gasoline, did not really drive this point home.

One of the major weaknesses in the development of this country is that we do not have a government that will look to the north, and the northwest, and the northeast, and say that we have to put people into those parts of the country and therefore we must make special provisions for them to settle there without being penalized financially.

I should like to remind the hon. member for Skeena that in the province of Ontario where we are supposedly all millionaires—thanks to the Ontario Progressive Conservative government—

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

**Mr. Blackburn:** —there are over 350,000 families, not individuals but families, who tonight are living below the poverty line. That is a despicable thing considering the wealth of the province.

Here we have Bill C-66, and the amendment to hoist it for six months, that is again going to put a burden—not on me because I have a big income—bigger than I could get when I was teaching school although their salaries are coming up rather rapidly—that 10 cents per gallon is not going to hurt me. Who is it going to hurt? It is going to hurt average Canadians, those making \$8,000 or \$9,000 a year, or up to \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year. That is where the burden is going to fall. It is going to fall equally in monetary terms, but when it comes to coping with the problems of living today it does not fall equally. It falls in a most unequal way.

In trying to justify this budget the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) said repeatedly that the main reason for the tax was to acquire further revenues. We know on this side