

I believe the government should give serious consideration to withdrawing this bill. Perhaps it is just as well that it comes at a time when parliament is scheduled, at any rate, to adjourn for the summer recess. Perhaps that will give the Minister of Finance and members of the government an opportunity to feel the pulse of the nation, to get the direct reaction of the people of the country who have to pay that tax every day, every week, every month as they fill up their tanks with gasoline.

In addition, we can anticipate further increases, another five cents per gallon, and increases in energy prices which will impose a heavy hardship on low income earners. It will mean a direct increase in the price of heating fuel and will cost more to heat homes. Who has to bear the burden? Who has to bear the excessively heavy burden? It will be the low income earner, the pensioner, the man on the fixed income, the unemployed person trying to get by on unemployment insurance or social welfare payments. If the low income earner is unfortunate enough to be in the ranks of the unemployed, and if the government has its way, he will see his unemployment insurance decrease if he has a dependent family.

This measure is highly inflationary. It is an inflationary measure contained in a disastrously inflationary budget.

According to the OECD, Canada is the only member country, with the exception of Great Britain, that does not have its inflation under control.

The Conference Board of Canada made a prediction on July 4, referring directly to the increase in the price of oil and the excise tax on gasoline. The board said:

● (2030)

Our estimates of the impact of these measures on prices is a 1.7 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index over the next twelve months.

Statistics Canada took an unusual step when announcing their CPI figures for the month of June. In the preamble to the announcement they said the figures did not include the impact of the increased price of gasoline which will result from this excise tax measure.

The Food Prices Review Board predicts that this measure will increase food prices.

The Grocery Products Manufacturers of Canada think food prices will go up. This is the way the *Globe and Mail* of July 16, 1975, puts it:

A high rate of food inflation is indicated in 1975, G.G.E. Steele, president of the Grocery Products Manufacturers of Canada, says.

The association estimates that food prices this year will increase by 12 per cent.

Already in the month of June food prices have gone up by 3.3 per cent. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) announced measures to restrict the importation of eggs to Canada from the United States. Mr. Speaker, eggs are a most important source of protein for low income earners. We were led to believe and have it on the authority of the minister, that these import restrictions were only imposed after CEMA put its house in order.

It is interesting to note the provisions of the new agreement signed by CEMA and the marketing boards of the provinces. Two provinces had to be forced to sign the agreement. The Minister of Agriculture threatened Alber-

Excise Tax Act

ta and New Brunswick that if they failed to sign, those provinces would be flooded with cheap eggs. Alberta announced, when signing the new agreement, that it will be withdrawing from CEMA, and served the required one year's notice.

The United States has indicated it will retaliate. That retaliation may further affect food prices in Canada. Beef prices alone rose 18 per cent last month owing to restrictions imposed by this same Minister of Agriculture a short time ago. There are indications that the United States will retaliate and, as I say, this could drastically affect Canadian food prices. Already egg prices have responded to the minister's announcement and risen. They could go higher still.

We are discussing this measure at a time when Canada is facing record high unemployment. We are discussing the imposition of this tax at a time when Canada faces another wave of record high inflation, at a time when food prices will continue to escalate and impose a severe burden on low income earners.

What will the proposed tax mean? I estimate that the average family in Canada will have to spend \$70 more per year on gasoline. It is all very well to eliminate certain users from the impact of this tax. I maintain that its net result will be inflationary. The net result will be to increase transport costs in Canada. Food production costs in Canada will rise and the increase will be passed directly on to the consumer.

I submit that this is not the time to propose this tax. The government can talk all it wants about filibuster. If this is a filibuster, so be it. We can only tolerate this tax if we force the government to push it through with closure. We can be justified in passing this measure only if there is closure, as this tax will impose an additional burden on the people of this country. I am prepared to stay here and speak as often as necessary. In any event, the government might be well advised to hold this bill over to the fall. If we adjourn. The adjournment will give the government an opportunity to gauge public reaction. Members will talk to their constituents and gauge the reaction of the people who must pay this tax. The unemployed must pay it. The middle income earner, who at this time of year is highly mobile on vacation, will find that his holiday cost more be reason of this tax.

What is happening? There is to be an increase in egg prices, an increase in gasoline prices, an increase in beef prices, and an increase in fuel oil prices. There are to be decreased benefits to low income earners with families, who must depend on unemployment insurance. The old age pensioner is to be eliminated from the unemployment insurance rolls. What kind of budget is this? What kind of Minister of Finance is this? What kind of government is this and, Mr. Speaker, what kind of parliament is this that can tolerate or accept such a measure?

The amendment put forward by my party should be considered seriously by the House. It is not a debating ploy, not a tactic to filibuster. It is a genuine and sincere expression of our concern on behalf of the people of Canada, because we think this tax should not be imposed, at least not at this time.