

Government Orders

Everyone I know was against free trade and it went through. The concerns of the common taxpayer are of no concern to the government. They do what they want and they aren't in a position to suffer from their decisions.

We work hard for our money and we aren't allowed to keep a decent portion of it. My husband works 10 hours a day, six days a week and we are always overdrawn at the bank, we do not have a new car—a 1980 small model—and we live in a small house. We don't drink, we don't go out except for the odd dinner out for a break and we all need clothes and other necessities. No matter how hard we work we don't get ahead.

Forgive me if my letter sounds bitter and hateful but I'm just so tired of the government and what it is doing to us. I thought I'd write and tell you how I feel and so many others feel the same way. They may not want to write because they feel it's hopeless, too. Can't you do something?

How could Tories sit over there and not respond to a plaintive cry for help as people are trod upon by this government which has no mandate to do what it is doing? None whatsoever, no mandate at all.

I want to say that we need 19 more Tories with courage, with guts, with backbone, not a wishbone where their backbone should be. We want them to stand up like the Member for Calgary Northeast, stand up and be counted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the Hon. Member's time has expired.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to take part today in this debate. I certainly support the motions that have been put forth by the Hon. Member for Calgary Northeast.

As an MP from Prince Edward Island, I have many concerns about this bill. Bill C-20 will affect our three main industries: farming, fishing and tourism. As well, it will affect the consumers, commuters and truckers. In fact, all islanders will be affected in some way by these changes.

This government claims to have chosen, and I quote, "a balanced approach that takes regional situations into account and that imposes the heaviest burden on those who are most able to bear it".

I contend that the measures contained in Bill C-20 reflect not a balanced approach but an unbalanced approach that stands to cost my part of the country, the Maritimes, more than other parts of Canada.

When we look at the elimination of the excise tax rebate on gasoline and diesel fuel, we see this means that

it will cost the farmers on Prince Edward Island roughly \$450,000 annually. We cannot forget that the farmer is also a consumer and that he is going to be hit by all these other tax increases. The gasoline tax increase when considered as an additional input cost of trucking will also mean higher freight rates to send crops to markets off the island.

If we look at another industry on Prince Edward Island, the tourist industry, we see that it means approximately \$100 million to the economy of our province. It employs roughly one-tenth of the population. This increase in the price of gasoline, which has gone up 32 cents a gallon since 1984, is going to mean that the cost of a holiday in P.E.I., or in any part of Canada, is going to be more expensive. What this is going to mean is that a trip south is going to look more appealing than coming to Prince Edward Island.

The fisheries industry is affected by Bill C-20, and it is a vital industry to my province. Like the farmer, the fisherman will lose his gasoline excise tax exemption at the end of December. That means when he goes out to fish next year he is going to have to pay more for his fuel.

Again, let us not forget that the fisherman is also a consumer and is going to be subject to all these other tax increases like the rest of us. As I said, consumers are the main target of these tax measures under Bill C-20.

The Canadian consumer has been the target of this government's tax increases since 1984. We have seen an increase in the sales tax from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. We have seen long distance telephone bills go from zero tax to 11 per cent tax. Finally, the gasoline tax has increased 7 cents per litre, or 32 cents a gallon, since 1984, and it may go even higher. Taxing the average Canadian consumer seems to be this government's policy. Since 1984 the total taxes of a family near the poverty line with two children and both parents working have gone up 176 per cent. The taxes on a comparable family earning \$100,000 or more have gone up only 11 per cent. That is not my definition of fair taxation. In fact, I think that it is simply horrendous. Here we have taxes on a lower income family which have gone up 176 per cent as compared to 11 per cent for the high income family. We have the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.