

Therefore, as a responsible member of this government I support this excise tax, and by the same token I sincerely deplore the fact that the premier of this province, on the eve of a provincial election, chooses to play this political game when he knows full well that there was no other way of guaranteeing a subsidy for offshore purchases and—I repeat—giving us the privilege to enjoy lower than world prices and continuation of a one-price system for Canadian consumers. One must also appreciate the fact that this excise tax will in no way cause an increase in the cost of consumers products, since the tax will cover only gasoline used in private automobiles, pleasure boats, motorcycles and snowmobiles. The tax will not affect fishermen or farmers, nor will it affect commercial and industrial users.

[Translation]

It is easy, Mr. Speaker, to criticize measures like the excise tax on gas, particularly for the opposition members who know very well that because of their lack of courage they will never be in office. As I said before, presenting a budget is not an easy task, and again it is most important that there be courageous people for making decisions for the well-being of the majority of Canadians, even though that involves a few sacrifices from some taxpayers. I am convinced that is why Canadians chose courageous people to form their government.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, in a slight change of tempo I want to talk of the problems we face in eastern Ontario, and most of all in my riding of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. As I mentioned previously, Queen's Park does not show—or, should I say, has never shown—any concern for our region, so I plead with this government to give every possible consideration to assisting this part of the province. I might suggest a few ways in which this government could help. First, by reinstating my riding as one of the designated areas. I must admit that we did belong to a designated area and the Prescott part of my riding obtained numerous substantial grants and attracted many industries. For this I am grateful. But the Glengarry part of my riding was not prepared then to accommodate industries as it is today.

Therefore, I ask that this riding be reinstated as a designated area. I am convinced that within a few months we would attract enough industry to our area to guarantee full employment at home and to eliminate travelling long distances to work centres such as Cornwall and Ottawa. Such action would serve two purposes. First, it would guarantee full employment; second, it would contribute to the energy-saving program by reducing travelling distance to work.

Another means of assisting us in Glengarry-Prescott-Russell would be to consider extending the boundaries of the national capital region. On Monday, June 23, prior to the budget presentation, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) proposed that a special joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate be appointed to study and report upon matters bearing upon the development of the National Capital Commission. I sincerely hope that the members appointed to this committee will give serious consideration to my request of extending the boundaries to include municipalities such as Rockland and Clarence, and also the remaining part of the township of

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Russell which was not included in the 1958 boundaries. Since the major employer of the residents of these municipalities is the federal government, in an effort to decentralize government services I suggest some government branches could be moved to areas such as Rockland. I am sure this municipality would welcome such a move.

Some may recall my maiden speech in this House when I suggested that something should be done in our district to cater to the ever-increasing tourist industry. I still maintain that position. I would recommend that our government discuss with the province of Ontario the possibility of transforming the vast Larose forest into a national park. Everyone knows the beauty of this vast region, but still it is not a tourist attraction. It could very well become one, should both governments agree.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, playgrounds, an open air theatre and a bicycle path could be developed; given the natural and well-wooded aspect of the area, a zoological garden could be established as the one at Granby which is an attraction for millions of tourists every year.

I do not think I am mistaken when I say that all the schoolboys in my constituency have gone to Granby and visited the zoo; we could have that kind of touristic attraction a few miles only from the National Capital if the two governments could come to an agreement. The new Highway 417 would make that area more accessible. Here, I wish to congratulate the government of Ontario for this first concrete gesture they have made in our area. But many shopkeepers on the old Highway 17 have been adversely affected by the opening of the new highway; their concern for the future, which I understand quite well, incites me to make these requests. I understand also that this matter is under provincial jurisdiction, but, knowing the snail's pace of Queen's Park, I ask my colleagues to give me their support so that we may help the people of my constituency whose businesses depend solely on the users of Highway 17.

In the southern part of my constituency, along the St. Lawrence, the Province of Ontario has organized two parks; I am convinced that this action helped all the businesses along the St. Lawrence. But on the northern side of my riding there is nothing to help businessmen on Highway 17 who were hard hit by the opening of new Highway 417.

I would like the government to consider the possibility of undertaking negotiations with the province of Ontario within a joint program financed on a 50-50 basis for the development or one or two parks along the Ottawa River, and if the province does not want to participate in such a program, perhaps even consider the possibility of an entirely federal project so those honest people will not be forced to close their businesses and go settle elsewhere.

Another point that is of great concern to me is the slow progress in the negotiations with Quebec and Ontario about building a new bridge between Grenville and Hawkesbury. In view of the danger existing on the present bridge if the tonnage limits are not respected, and considering the lack of interest of both provinces involved I would propose that this government build immediately a new bridge, even if it has to pay the entire cost. It is unthinkable that in 1975 provincial governments like