

*Excise Tax Act*

Where is the 100 per cent support for the imposition of this tax to which reference was made in debate a short time ago?

**Mr. Epp:** Whose statement did you read from?

**Mr. Patterson:** It was a statement by the hon. member for Windsor West.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Patterson:** By the way, talking about rapid transit, may I say that during the election campaign I was amazed to read in the paper or hear over the news a statement by the right hon. Prime Minister, who said that a rapid transit system would be implemented through Fraser Valley, B.C.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** Run by beavers.

**Mr. Patterson:** I was reminded of the statement he made right in this House that he would do everything he possibly could to help his friend—

**An hon. Member:** Gerry Pringle.

**Mr. Patterson:** The gentleman whom I had the privilege of dethroning in the last election.

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

**Mr. Patterson:** The Prime Minister said that he would do everything he possibly could to help his friend in Fraser Valley East. I suppose that was a promise pulled out of thin air, and I do not believe there was ever any intention to implement that policy. I must say that the Prime Minister's friend has gone to his reward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** I regret to interrupt the hon. member but I should point out to him that we are now discussing Bill C-66, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act.

● (2130)

**Mr. Patterson:** I am conscious of that fact, and I am talking about the Prime Minister of Canada making the statement that he would put in a rapid transit system in my riding to facilitate travel, and the ministers are now saying that people have to go to that type of operation in order to conserve energy and not to use automobiles. With all due deference, I would think this is very relevant to the issue we are debating.

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

**Mr. Patterson:** In passing I wish to point out that the gentleman to whom the Prime Minister made reference has gone to his reward, or come to his reward, because like all good Liberals who were defeated, he is finding a job provided by the government, as are some of the others who were appointed just recently.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Oh, oh!

[Mr. Patterson.]

**Mr. Patterson:** There is my hon. friend over there again. It is good to hear his voice even though he does not say anything.

In his budget speech the minister referred to the fact that even with a 10 cents tax per gallon added on, Canadians still pay less for their gas than people in countries like France, where the price is \$2; Tokyo, where it is \$1.80; London and Geneva where it is \$1.70; and Bonn and Stockholm where it is \$1.60. What in the world has that to do with the price of gas in Canada?

**Mr. Kempling:** It's 15 cents in Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Patterson:** I cannot see any relevance in those references.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Patterson:** We hear again from our friend, the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi. We are glad to hear from him even though he makes no sense.

If Canada were a small nation like the ones referred to by the minister where even on our old 50 mile per hour trains we could get from one end of the country to the other in eight hours or so, I am sure Canadians would get by with a 10 cents per gallon increase, but none of those countries have a 300 mile per hour train, and the fact is that those countries are so small that one can go anywhere in them in a very short period of time.

I had the privilege of going over to Marville, France, some years ago. I wanted to see a friend, and I asked a question of the officers in charge. I asked them if my friend was there, and they said that he was over in Holland for the weekend. Later I went back again and asked if my friend was around. I was told that he was in Spain for the weekend. Here we have a reference to the price of oil in countries where people can go wherever they want in a very few hours, whereas in Canada hundreds and thousands of miles are involved.

This tax will not conserve gasoline. It will not make Canadians cut down their use of the automobile, simply because they must travel that way. This tax will further increase the inflationary spiral. Now that we are supposed to wrestle inflation to the ground, the minister slaps on another tax which will add perhaps 1½ percentage points to the cost of living. I wonder if that is the kind of rationale the minister is accustomed to using. The tremendous increase in the cost of living has been pointed out by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). In other countries the inflationary spiral is declining, but at a time when in Canada the rate is increasing the minister imposes a new 10 cents tax on gasoline.

What effect will this have on wage demands? If workers have to pay an extra 10 cents per gallon for gas to get to work, they will say that they need higher incomes and that they need to go on strike to get them or they will lose ground. So there is a pressure exerted for higher wage settlements.

This tax will place an increased load of work upon businessmen. Those who are using their automobiles are to receive rebates. How much more work will they have to do? How much added cost will there be for these people? They are overloaded now with work they are doing for the