

The Deputy Chairman: I am saying that Standing Order 59 of the Standing Orders of the House shall be observed in Committee of the Whole so far as may be applicable, except the Standing Orders regarding the seconding of motions, the limiting of the number of times of speaking and the length of speeches. I would like the Hon. Member to be relevant as far as Clause 1 is concerned.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Chairman, I will seek your guidance. I was asking the Minister about the sales tax increase. Is that not a part of the clause?

Mrs. McDougall: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I thought the Hon. Member was speaking to you.

I think we have made abundantly clear the situation with which we are faced. We are asking Canadians to share in helping us resolve some of our difficulties. We do not like to have to ask them to do that but the tax increase was essential at this time. As I said, we introduced it reluctantly given the fiscal situation in which we find ourselves.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Minister said that the rebate on the excise tax on gasoline was 4.8 cents per litre. Does that 4.8 cents include the rebate that was already in place for the last 10 years plus a new rebate or is it just the new rebate?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, that includes the three cents and the 1.8 cents from the PCC.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could be a little more explicit. I asked her if the figure includes only the rebate to be received under this Bill or if it includes the total rebate.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, no, because there is—

Ms. Copps: Who's running this country anyway?

Mrs. McDougall: Not you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. McDougall: In addition to the 4.8 cents, there is 1.5 cents, which I believe is the figure to which the Hon. Member refers, that has been in place for 10 years or so.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to explain the difference in figures or to give us an understanding of just what the total rebate on the excise tax on gasoline will be to a primary producer. As the Minister knows, the rebate on the excise tax on gasoline was available to fishermen and farmers for many years. There is a total value on that rebate. Then there is an additional value added by the legislation before us today. I would like to have the Minister explain just what the figures are.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, the figures are three cents plus 1.8 cents plus 1.5 cents.

Excise Tax Act

Mr. Foster: Mr. Chairman, as I understand the two excise taxes and the petroleum compensation charge, the farmer, fisherman, logger or miner will not have to pay the three cents and the 1.8 cents. I wonder why the Minister did not provide for the 1.5 cents excise tax which I believe was imposed by the Budget of June 10, 1975, to be withheld as well. Why is that being left so that the primary producer must submit a claim for a refund for that 1.5 cents excise tax that has been sitting there for many years? He does not pay it. It just seems to me that that makes for more bookkeeping. I wonder if we could introduce an amendment in committee to provide that the 1.5 cents per litre excise tax which has been in existence for some time could be taken away so that the primary producer does not have to pay it when he buys the fuel.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, that is a matter that is with the Department of National Revenue. They are reviewing the way that tax is assessed and will be bringing something regarding that before the House. However, it is not my Department.

The Deputy Chairman: I believe the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate had a supplementary question.

Mr. Baker: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The only reason I am putting this very important question to the Minister is that some confusion arises, when someone talks about a rebate on the excise tax to primary producers and uses figures, as to where the total figure comes from. It is still confusing in my mind. The Minister indicates that it is three cents here, 1.8 cents there and 1.5 cents here. I still do not understand that the Minister has said and I do not understand what the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board said yesterday. Members of the general public do not understand what they said either. I would like some clarification.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, I apologize for confusing the Hon. Member. Far be it for me to do that.

The old tax was 1.5 cents a litre for all gasoline. The new one is 4.8 cents a litre, combining the 1.8 cents and the three cents a litre, and it applies to diesel fuel and gasoline. They do not quite compare and it is hard to give the Hon. Member a total figure.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Chairman, I am still confused after having listened to this debate. Perhaps I could ask the Minister how much better off a farmer or a fisherman will be under this legislation. Will his energy costs be reduced by 4.8 cents or by five cents or by 1.5 cents? How much better off is the primary producer going to be?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Chairman, under this Bill that is before us today, the primary producer is better off by three cents. Under the Petroleum Administration Act, the primary producer is better off by 1.8 cents. Under the old Bill, the primary producer is better off on that portion of it by 1.5 cents.