

Excise Tax Act

levels, this sum is barely sufficient for sinking a well in the Beaufort Sea.

It is also unfortunate that the government is attempting to mislead the public by suggesting that the industry is to blame for these increases, but I do not believe that this will work this time.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, these statements are very clear and put the problem in its true context. There is also a very important point that I would like to emphasize in the comment of Mr. McAfee and it concerns our need to establish an energetic prospection program. This goes along with the motion proposed recently in the House by my colleague, the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte). His motion, proposed under the terms of Standing Order 43, asked that a complete inventory report of all our resources in this field be given to the House so that we may truly know what are our supplies, our potential and our capacities for producing oil.

In passing, I congratulate my colleague for his motion as it contains a truly serious element to solve our present and future problems as concerns oil. This was a very appropriate and positive proposal, but the government preferred to ignore it and to put forward measures which, instead, are going to boost inflation. That increase in gas price will immediately result in a 2 per cent rise in the cost of living. That is an economic blunder. Further, the Shah of Iran, in a press conference in Mexico recently, indicated that the oil producing nations were firmly decided to hike their prices by 35 per cent, which will play a decisive role against consumers and will result in yet another increase in the cost of living index.

The least we can say in view of such a situation and given the blunders of the government is that the many people who are expressing concern are not altogether wrong. The government's administration goes against common sense. On the one hand, they have no qualms about considerably reducing the margin of movement of business, on the other hand, they attack the worker by limiting his purchasing power seriously.

Just as we have unleaded gas, so have we unleaded officials and governments. If private enterprises acted the way the government is now doing, it would not take long for them to go bankrupt. If the Liberal party does not change its attitude, it will soon lead the country to state socialism, for the worker will get tired of working for nothing because the cost he will have to pay to go to work will be higher than what he will bring back home to feed his children. It is obvious that I cannot support Bill C-66 and that I must vote against this increase in gas prices, because that measure is simply unacceptable and will have no other effect than to fuel inflation and affect the Canadian worker.

[English]

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, of all the bills presented to parliament by any government for many years, this bill, Bill C-66 to amend the Excise Tax Act, as reprinted, has generated more heat, caused the loss of more energy, and more hate and distrust of government, than any other bill ever presented. The people of this nation are mad, their mood ugly. They are bitter.

Mr. Béchard: I did not receive one letter or beef.

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

Mr. Jones: Then you should use the Canada post. If one studies the bill and thinks about the alleged reasons or excuses for it, one will readily find that the bill is inconsistent per se. It is plain ridiculous and senseless. It is the type of legislation, however, that one could expect from a government which has full, arbitrary control, a so-called majority government, but a regime that is lacking in foresight and leadership and the common sense to take steps now which would alleviate the problems and issues which it has permitted to multiply, such as unemployment, inflation, housing, and all the other crises in our nation.

Some hon. members who have spoken on this bill have implied that this may be the last budget of the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner). I could not care less about the future political career of the Minister of Finance, but I do care about the future of this nation and our citizens. I could not care less whether we call this bill the "Turner Cop-out", the "Turner Turn-out", or the "Turner Turnover". To me it is like a plain tart without any filling. It is dry, tasteless, hard to swallow, too flaky, and it is sickening and stifling.

An hon. Member: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Jones: The hon. member can ask a question at the end of my remarks; in the meantime I would ask him to keep quiet since under the rules I have the floor.

This bill purports to do four things. First, it purports to remove the excise tax on certain items, such as insulation materials, which should have been done years ago. Second, it increases the air transportation tax. There is no indication as to how this money will be spent. Will it be used to benefit the users of airport facilities across the country, or only the major facilities? Third, it purports to reduce the excise tax on certain wines, and fourth, it imposes an excise tax of ten cents per gallon on gasoline.

● (1550)

The Minister of Finance says that the purposes of this excessive and exorbitant inflationary gasoline tax are to conserve gasoline, to provide added revenue, and there is some indication that it is to enable the country to stay on a one price system. All these alleged excuses or reasons for the introduction of this ten cents excise tax are invalid and inconsistent. If it were a conservation method, it would not have that much effect. The large users are the commercial users, and they will receive a rebate.

The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Basford) yesterday went on and on with a long list of persons and corporations which would be exempt. He told us it is estimated that the annual take on this tax by the government—and I presume that is the estimated gross take—is to be about \$350 million in 1975 and half a billion dollars in 1976, but neither the Minister of National Revenue nor the Minister of Finance, nor anyone else, told us just how much will be refunded. We are entitled to know just how much is the net tax to be collected after the administration and collection costs, and after the refunds. It occurred to me, as I listened to the debate and heard some of the ministers, that with typical government and bureaucratic red tape and bungling, and continual empire building, the