

direct tax on all private motorists. It creates another hardship for the majority of motorists who are in the lower and middle income groups.

It has been pointed out very clearly that this tax will add tremendously to the burden of the Canadian taxpayer in general, and will fall particularly on those who use their automobiles in order to struggle to make a living. In this connection we realize that the minister is not too concerned about that, because if he was very concerned he certainly would not have brought in this measure. The burden will fall on those people who have retirement in mind and the hope of enjoying a little of the fruits of their labours over a period of 30, 40 or 50 years. Now the minister plunks another ten cents tax on them and thus curtails the enjoyment they were looking for in their retirement. So the tax is falling upon those who have every right to expect some consideration from this government. Surely to goodness they will come to the realization pretty soon that they cannot expect it from the administration that we have at present.

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The government's complete bungling of the housing situation over the years has forced many Canadians further and further away from the cities in search of reasonably priced land for their accommodation. Here again this tax will fall directly upon them. I had a letter just the other day from a constituent who pointed out that he had to travel 80 miles a day to and from his place of employment. If you figure 20 miles on a gallon of gas, it just shows how much extra money he will have to spend on getting to and from his place of employment.

**An hon. Member:** How much?

**Mr. Patterson:** Surely to goodness you have the competence to figure it out in your head.

**Mr. Corbin:** Say it.

**Mr. Patterson:** As we consider this particular aspect, we realize that this measure will not conserve gasoline, if that is the reason for the imposition of this tax. I do not believe it is. I believe it is just a matter of getting some more money. If there is any justification in the claim that has been advanced that this tax will conserve gas, let me point out that it will not conserve gasoline because that man will still have to drive to and from work, but he will have that much less with which to buy food for his family. So the whole situation is ridiculous.

We find now that people are being forced, because of government policy—the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) is here in the House tonight and I am sure he realizes this—and because people will have to move farther and farther away from their place of employment in order to find accommodation, to become more dependent upon energy in the form of gasoline. So this tax will fall upon them in a very real sense.

It is all very well for the Minister of Finance to talk cavalierly about people cutting down on their driving and switching to public transportation, but this has no relevance to Canadians who live out in the fringe areas of the cities. Here we come to another area of hardship imposed

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on the people of this nation, that is, the lack of protective and efficient rapid transit systems in our cities. Some may say that this is not relevant to the bill before us, but it certainly is because the minister and the government said, "Let them find other means of transportation". But there is no other form of transportation. An automobile today is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity.

**Mr. Herbert:** It depends on what you drive.

**Mr. Patterson:** I did not hear that interjection.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** You did not miss much.

**Mr. Patterson:** I do not worry about them. I am saying there is no other mode of transportation, and these people will have to use their automobiles and will have to use gasoline. So the minister comes along now and says, "Too bad, folks, you are using too much gasoline to drive back and forth, you will have to walk now". This places him in a position beyond reason altogether, and the imposition of his tax will add an additional burden on the people.

I have in my hand a document which I received in the mail entitled "Notes for a Speech by the Hon. Herb Gray, P.C. M.P. to a meeting of the Ottawa Kiwanis Club, Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, Friday, July 4, 1975". I would like the privilege of putting a paragraph or two on the record. It reads:

The Minister of Finance stated the purposes of the excise tax are to encourage conservation of petroleum energy and to provide additional government revenues needed to make up the deficit in the program to cushion eastern Canada against the burden of paying the full world price for the oil it has to import—

As a conservation device, the new excise tax is unrealistic and is also unfair to millions of Canadians. It implies a government view that Canadians who use their cars to travel to work, for essential family purposes like food shopping and visits to physicians, can turn to alternative forms of public transit instead.

By allowing a rebate of the tax to those using cars for so called commercial purposes (basically those who can deduct the cost as a business expense) the government is implying that all other use has elements of frivolity and be cut down easily or that rapid transit can be a realistic substitute for it. There may be some element of discretionary use which can be reduced—people can cut down perhaps on pure pleasure trips and the recreational use of snowmobiles and boats. But for millions of Canadians who have little or no opportunity for this type of activity because of their already hard pressed incomes, there are no alternatives to continue using their cars as before and therefore to paying the tax.

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Stay home and drink wine.

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

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** That is a great platform. You can run on that one.

**Mr. Patterson:** For the edification of the minister I would like to quote further from this statement. The hon. member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) said:

Contrast this with the transportation policy in the election platform of a year ago. In it were a number of clearly spelled out commitments to specific federal government action—action to bring about the speedy development of urban rapid transit.

However, the government's recent transportation policy document did not even say (as it might have) that the government continues to hold to these commitments, but has reluctantly come to the view they would have to be carried out over a longer period of time.