

*Excise*

encompass most of the tourist operators in my area—will be able to survive a 10 per cent addition on their pleasure craft.

This affects not only recreational facilities in my area. I live on the shores of Lake Nipissing and Nipissing is the name of my riding. It is a relatively shallow lake, 130 feet on the average; it is 65 miles long and 25 miles wide. It is not possible to cross that lake with a 20 horse power motor and the sort of equipment that is envisaged in this particular item. There is also an Indian reservation at each end of the lake, and the Indians use their boats for transportation.

● (2040)

**An hon. Member:** On the lake?

**Mr. Blais:** Yes, on the lake. I have not seen a boat on the highway for some time.

**An hon. Member:** You walk on the lake.

**Mr. Blais:** I am told that in certain areas of Manitoba that are short of water they have to go around in those prairie sailboats.

**An hon. Member:** Prairie schooner.

**Mr. Blais:** We are using these boats in my area not only for leisure but for essential transportation.

The third point that I should like to bring to the minister's attention is that we are trying to stop this trend toward urbanization by offering attractive living conditions to people who reside in the non-urban areas. There are individuals in my area who work for \$3.25 an hour, which is relatively better than the average wage—more than I get I am told!

**An hon. Member:** You are not worth more.

**Mr. Blais:** These individuals cannot afford to take long trips to Florida in the wintertime, like some members, nor can they afford to go to Toronto for the culture that city can offer. Peterborough is even out of the way. Mr. Chairman, they have to use the area they live in and for that they need the equipment. If that sort of equipment and access to it are removed, we are telling them they cannot use the facilities which surround them for their leisure. We are telling them it is no use going to those areas, that they had better stay in Toronto. I think this is a serious matter and one that has to be considered. In effect what we are asking people to do is face economic difficulty at a time when there is knowledge—

**An hon. Member:** Why don't you leave the party?

**An hon. Member:** Come on over.

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Chairman, some members are suggesting that I join them over there, and that is making my throat awfully dry.

I want to conclude by saying that, according to all indications, we are not facing comfortable times. That will go doubly for the tourist industry. If we penalize it with an additional burden we will see catastrophe in certain areas, even some areas that other government departments

[Mr. Blais.]

are attempting to encourage through direct federal grants. I feel the minister ought to reconsider his position, and I strongly urge him to do so.

**The Chairman:** The hon. member for Capilano.

**Mr. Symes:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, it has been my experience that it is traditional in standing committees and committee of the whole that the chairman recognize a spokesman from each party. You have recognized Conservative, Cr ditiste and Liberal spokesmen. I would ask you to recognize a spokesman from the NDP.

**The Chairman:** Order, please. I will invite the hon. member to be persistent and be present. Some hon. members have been standing up perhaps ten times, and I think one of them is the hon. member for Capilano.

**Mr. Huntington:** Mr. Chairman, I have been most interested in the minister's reply to questions about the reason for this tax. He has pointed out that \$30 million in revenue is involved. I should like to point out that with a little belt tightening the government could surely guard against \$30 million worth of waste in its programs.

The minister also pointed out that in this age of diminishing non-renewable energy resources, this is a conservation measure. I have to say in all sincerity that that is a phony answer. We have heard from the Atlantic side of the country about the importance of the boating industry to their way of life and industries, both the construction of boats and their recreational use.

In British Columbia in 1966 there were 87,000 pleasure boats, in 1974 there were 161,800 and the estimate for 1980 is 229,400. This expansion in recreational boating has come about because of reduced hours of work and increased remuneration for work. We have gone through an era of government which has encouraged us to make use of idle time, and in almost all areas of the country boating has become a very desirable and accepted way of doing so.

In the greater Vancouver area in 1966 we had a shortfall in public wet berths of 5,170; in 1974, the shortfall in public wet berths for pleasure boats was 9,580. The government has given us the small harbours assistance program and pays 50 per cent of the cost of development of breakwaters to meet this shortfall in wet berths. On the one hand it acknowledges there is a problem, and on the other hand it says, this tax is a conservation measure.

The 10 per cent excise tax to be applied to new boats built from now on in no way encourages owners of boats to conserve fuel. If the minister is serious about conserving fuel he should gradually lift the price in Canada to world market levels in order to create a consciousness that would conserve fuel. This tax is a totally negative measure, and I submit will not produce \$30 million in revenue.

I have copies of letters sent by responsible people in the industry to the minister, Mr. Chairman, which point out the difficulties and confusion being created in the industry. It will be an administrative nightmare. A tax is put on boats driven by a motivating force over 20 horsepower. If the boat has accessories, those accessories are subject to tax. If the hull, drive, and motivating force are built separately, and the accessories are bought separately, there is no tax on the accessories. All that is being done is