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## Halton M.P. Appeals for Abandoning 15% Car Tax

Sybil Bennett, QC, MP, speaking in the House of Commons on May 12th, appealed for a full reduction of the 15 per cent excise tax on automobiles, giving a list of reasons which she feels would make such a move sensible. Here is Miss Bennett's speech as quoted in Hansard:

Mr. Speaker, this has been a long debate, and I had not intended to take part in it. However, I shall speak for only a few moments.

In rising to speak may I say that I feel I have some prescriptive right, if I may put it that way, because I would remind the house that for about a year I had asked the minister of finance to reduce the excise tax on automobiles. Of course I was very happy, along with all members in the house and the people of Canada generally, to see a reduction. But may I say, with all due respect to the minister, that I think he should have gone further. I believe there should have been a full reduction of this 15 per cent tax, commonly described as a luxury tax.

One of my reasons for saying this is that not many weeks ago the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) said in the house that the upswing in business and employment in the United States was in no small measure due to the upswing in the automotive industry, and the in-

creased production in that industry. What is true of that country would be equally true of this. I am told further that if the tax were removed entirely we would be able to produce cars in Canada as cheaply as they do in the United States. This would mean a tremendous increase and widening of the market for motor cars.

Singling out this industry in particular, it must be kept in mind that considering it in its primary stage, which is the production of motor cars, and also in its secondary stage, its tertiary stage, and all its other ramifications, the automotive industry is the largest employer of men and women in Canada. That means a great deal. It means that it is the largest producer of homes and of food and all those things required to maintain the population of this country. We must also keep in mind that not only is this a very important industry, but that at least 170 other industries in this nation are entirely dependent upon the production of automobiles. These various industries stretch from coast to coast, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They provide work and homes and all those things the employees require.

When one stops to consider the amount of steel, iron, aluminum, rubber, oil, textiles and products of the farm that are used in the manufacture of motor cars and all their component parts, and thinks at the same time of the farmers who receive additional income, one realizes just how important it is. Just think of the employees in the steel industry, the aluminum industry who need support and assistance at this time. I note the minister has just now entered the chamber, and I trust he will give this matter sound and diligent thought and consideration, to ascertain whether it would not be advisable, right at this time when we have unemployment in somewhat serious proportions, to consider entirely removing the 15 per cent excise tax from automobiles.

I believe the country would benefit from such action. I believe the treasury would benefit by way of additional sales, additional employment and additional taxation. Sometimes I think we lose sight of the fact that 90 per cent of the men and women driving cars in Canada are earning \$1000 a year or less. This means that 90 per cent of the men and women driving cars are on salaries in the lower brackets. They are the men and women who are moving from place to place, maintaining the mobility of labour. It was not so many weeks ago the Minister of Labour mentioned the fact that the mobility of labour in this country meant a great deal in maintaining the level of employment. We would greatly increase the numbers of car buyers if the prices of automobiles could be reduced through a further reduction in the tax.

I know the country must collect taxes, but it may be that we are at the point of diminishing return so far as the automotive industry is concerned. In my view the additional revenue that would come to the minister from other industries by way of income tax would more than compensate him. I venture to say he would be further ahead if the excise tax were removed, and in the meantime it is almost certain that several thousand more people would be given employment. When I say that I think I am speaking very conservatively.

I have said I would be brief, but there are one or two further comments I have to make, the first of which has to do with the royal commission the minister announced. I do hope that when it is appointed careful consideration will be given to processing our raw materials into finished products. I am sure it is correct to say that we are 25 or 50 years behind the times in this respect. We are still directing our economy along the lines we followed when we were a young country, when we had tremendous resources which it was felt, could never be exploited. In those days we had a small population and it was all right to send out our raw materials and allow some other country to process them.

But what has happened? Our supplies of iron ore are running out, and the same applies to our supplies of aluminum. The same can be said about our nickel and copper. All these are going to the United States to be processed. One outstanding example I would place before the minister for his consideration is that of asbestos fibre. Canada sells \$60 million worth of asbestos fibre to the United States each year. In that country our asbestos is processed and turned into finished products for resale. The result is that the \$60 million becomes \$450 million in the United States.

Think of the homes that sum of money provides. Think of the building it makes possible. Think of the clothes and the food, the extent to which all concerned along the line benefit by this \$450 million. I say we have arrived at a stage in this country when we must keep those raw materials within our own borders, and give to our men and women the benefit of the returns that can be obtained from those materials, and the labour opportunities that would be opened up.

Then I have one further point—it seems that I keep on saying I have one more statement to make and this has to do with immigration. I hope the royal commission will consider immigration so we may have some over-all plan. This is a great and magnificent country. It can be

said that in the last 50 years in particular the very foundations of what we have in Canada today industrially, economically, socially and indeed morally, were laid by the newcomers to this nation, those who went out to our frontiers and opened up our farms, our mines, our forests and our fisheries. We should have some over-all plan under which new people coming to this country would go to our frontiers, would man our new lands, would go to our mines, our fisheries and our forest industry.

What really is happening now, and it is a rather serious thing, is this. We see it down in the older parts of Ontario, particularly in the north of my county where a great deal of farming is carried on. These newcomers come in and they go on the farms. They stay there only a short time. Then what happens? They leave and go into the cities, into the crowded industrial areas, and there they try to find employment. During the last year they helped to swell the ranks of the unemployed. The farmers are not really able to depend on them staying during the season when they need them most.

Therefore in this country we should adopt some real over-all plan under which these new people coming in will go out and make themselves worthy citizens, which they want to do, and at the same time further expand, extend and exploit this great land to the extent that it should be exploited.

This is the last point, Mr. Speaker. A great many things have been said in this debate, and they did not always refer to finance. This is becoming a very dangerous country in which to live. The other night the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. Studer) more or less raised a battle cry in this house. He said the gentlemen of the house should wear beards to protect themselves. I guess, against the women, to whom he referred in not too complimentary terms, as I recall it. He said we have four women sitting in the house right now.

Well, you know, we have had a great many conflicts in this house, Mr. Speaker, over the years, many historic conflicts, but now we are about to have the greatest conflict of them all. I look across the house, I look to my left and I look to my right and I think of all these great men such as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) himself and perhaps the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Winter) who just went out. I can just visualize how they would look with beards. You know, Mr. Speaker, I shudder to think what is going to happen with respect to dislocation of industry. For example, barbers will be out of employment. Then the steel makers will be on short time, too, because they will not be making razors. The soap makers will be on short time because they will not be making soap powder and soap, or whatever these gentlemen use on their faces, to say nothing of the perfumeries. All these gentlemen use perfume and put these lotions on their faces, but sometimes you cannot tell whether it is a shaving lotion or what it is.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a tremendous displacement of industry just because the men of this house want to make themselves into Goliaths; they want to be Samsons. Let me remind them, before they embark on this venture, that for every Goliath there is a David and for every Samson there is a Delilah.

#### PAPER DRIVE SATURDAY

Waste paper contributed this Saturday to the Boy Scouts will aid their summer camp funds. Have your paper bundles outside by 9 a.m.



#### TENDERS FOR COAL AND COKE

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SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned and endorsed as above, will be received until 3 p.m. (EDST.), Thursday, June 9, 1955, for the supply of coal and coke for the Federal Buildings throughout the Province of Ontario.

Forms of tender with specifications and conditions attached can be obtained from the Chief of Purchasing and Stores, Dept. of Public Works, Ottawa, and the District Architect, 30 Adelaide St. East, Toronto, Ont.

Tenders will not be considered unless made on or according to the printed forms supplied by the Dept. and in accordance with conditions set forth therein.

The Department reserves the right to demand from any successful tenderer, before awarding the order, a security deposit in the form of a certified cheque drawn on a bank incorporated under the Bank Act or the Quebec Savings Bank Act payable to the order of the Hon. the Minister of Public Works, equal to ten per cent of the amount of tender, in accordance with the Government Contracts Regulations now in force, or Bearer Bonds with unmaturoed coupons, of the Government of Canada or of the Canadian National Railway Company and its constituent companies, unconditionally guaranteed as to principal and interest by the Government of Canada. The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

ROBERT FORTIER,  
Chief of Administrative Services and Secretary,  
Dept. of Public Works, Ottawa, May 10, 1955.

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# THINK

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Do you really need to drive?

Does that vacation you are planning include the operation of your car?

**THINK** Don't take your licence for granted. The operation of a motor car or motor truck is a privilege which can be suspended.

**REMEMBER** Your driver's licence will be suspended if you are convicted of a criminal offence or of any offence arising out of an accident. 21,000 licences were suspended in 1954. Many of those whose licences were suspended lost their jobs—others had to find a new line of business. What would YOU do without a driver's licence?

**THINK** and keep your licence.

*Jas. M. Allan*  
MINISTER

ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

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