

Overseas Writer Discusses British Budget

By George Abell of Stouffville

You know all about the British budget of March 12th by now. The London correspondents for the Can. press have filled columns of the big dailies with comments and conjecture as to what effect its provisions will have on the country. But the whole thing boils down to what difference the change will make to pay pockets, the price tickets on grocery shelves and whether the family budget will balance at the end of the week or not.

You hear all sorts of comment on the matter here. Some people think it was a good budget and others hold the opposite view. To understand why there is this difference of opinion it is necessary to realize that politically and financially there are now two separate groups of people in the British Isles.

While it would be incorrect to say that everyone is either a Socialist or Conservative, worker or owner, the results of the last three general elections have shown that nearly member of the adult population comes into one group or the other and there is little chance of them seeing eye to eye on any point as their interests

are too far apart. It's the same as in the days that Oliver Cromwell was having trouble with the Royalists.

To make a short story long, any budget item that takes away any of the cherished privileges of the Welfare State brings screams of rage and grief from the Socialists. Increased taxes, money or credit restrictions, etc., produce the same effect on the other half of the people.

As Butler mixed it up fairly well this time they all scream at once but not quite as loud as was expected for he did show a little mercy to nearly every income group.

The bolt from the blue was a reduction in income tax. Allowances are increased and the rates lowered so that an additional two million wage earners will escape tax altogether. In addition there has been very substantial decreases in tax payable on overtime in an effort to provide incentive for increased coal and factory production. A lot of people are happy about this but the seven million workers who pay no income tax anyway because they don't make enough can't see much to be happy about. The reason being

that to make up for the taxes so lost: the food subsidies have been slashed by a hundred and fifty million pounds a year. Bread is up a penny a loaf, milk a penny a pint, bacon a shilling a pound, eggs a shilling a dozen, to mention a few changes in food while the details of increased purchase tax on clothes and shoes are being worked out now.

Let's take the case of a family whose two children play with ours. The father's wage is six pounds ten shillings a week and take home pay after National health deductions is just over six pounds or \$18.00. This sum has to feed four people, pay rent, buy clothes, coal, electricity, but I won't go on. You all know the rest. As he pays no income tax these changes are of no value and it really hurts when the butcher, baker, grocer, milkman, etc., need extra money each week. Where will it come from when the family budget is already stretched to the snapping point? "Aha," says Brother Butler, "we have not forgotten you mothers." The family allowance is to be increased from five to eight shillings a week so that extra three bob will take care of the increases. There is no allowance

paid for the first child so won't that all be lovely for this lady. What happened is that Dad has to make ten small cigarettes last two days and Mom will be eating bread and margarine for her midday meal when she is alone.

Let's take a look at another family at the other end of the street. The husband is a fur cutter in the London fur house that supplies the made up furs to the Royal household. He makes twenty-five pounds a week of which income tax takes nearly eight. He will be a pound a week better off with the tax changes and the only adverse point of the 12th of March was another hike of 7 pence half penny a gallon on gasoline which was expected as the motorist is always fair game for the tax gatherer. This man, along with most skilled artisans is happy about the whole thing and feels that Rab is the finest little finance minister that ever opened a brief case in the House of Commons on budget day.

We'll continue our little tour to a house about quarter of a mile away in a district where houses, landscaped gardens, cars in the garage and mortgages are the biggest and finest in town.

The man of this house who shall remain nameless so I'll be sure of being blameless, (as the society columnist says) owns a chain of seven high class, retail shoe stores. According to him he's been betray-

ed, his own class has decided to destroy him and the world is a very dark place indeed. His good wife's moaning when the terms came out sounded like an air raid siren in the next block on a foggy night. All this was because the bank rate (ask Norm Baker what it means, I haven't a clue myself) was raised from 2½% to 4%, and the banks are now charging 5% on overdrafts. This will make a big difference to the man for he borrows twenty thousand pounds each year at this time to finance summer stocks. In addition to this there are increased business taxes which may make life more complicated for him.

The budget terms were drafted to help the majority but the old phrase still applies "You can't please all the people all the time."

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"the drivers are swell!"



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and I had a long bus trip and the drivers were really swell. When we changed buses the driver helped grandma and me to pick out our new bus and he told her not to worry about anything. The new driver was swell too and he told me he had a little girl like me at home. I sure like going on the bus."



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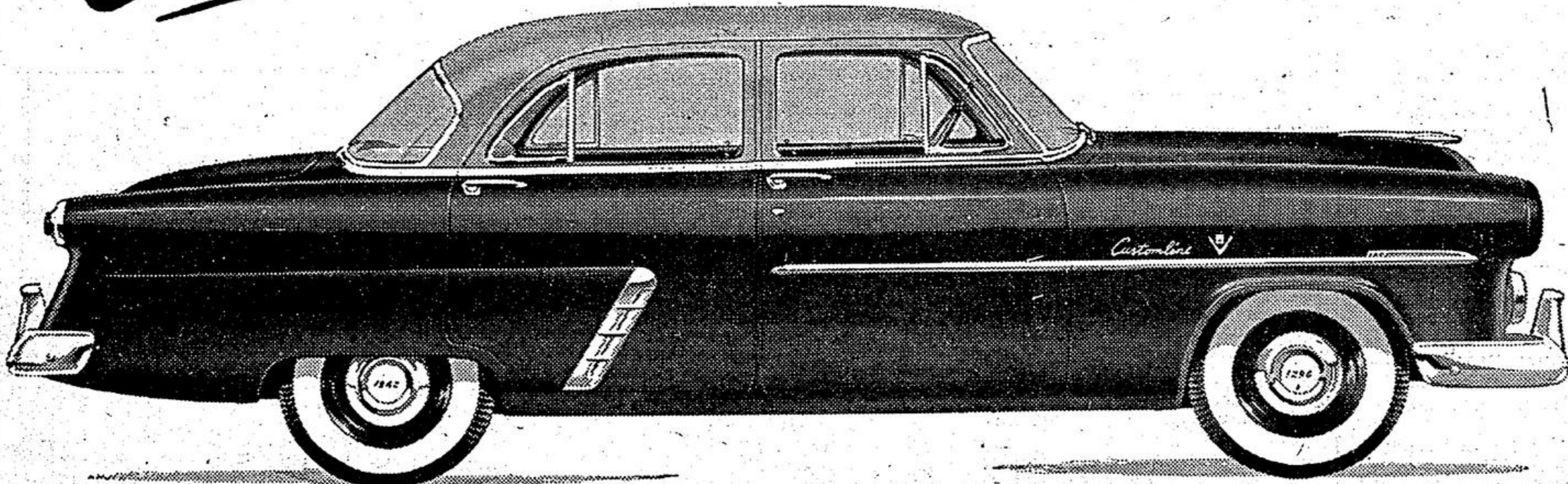
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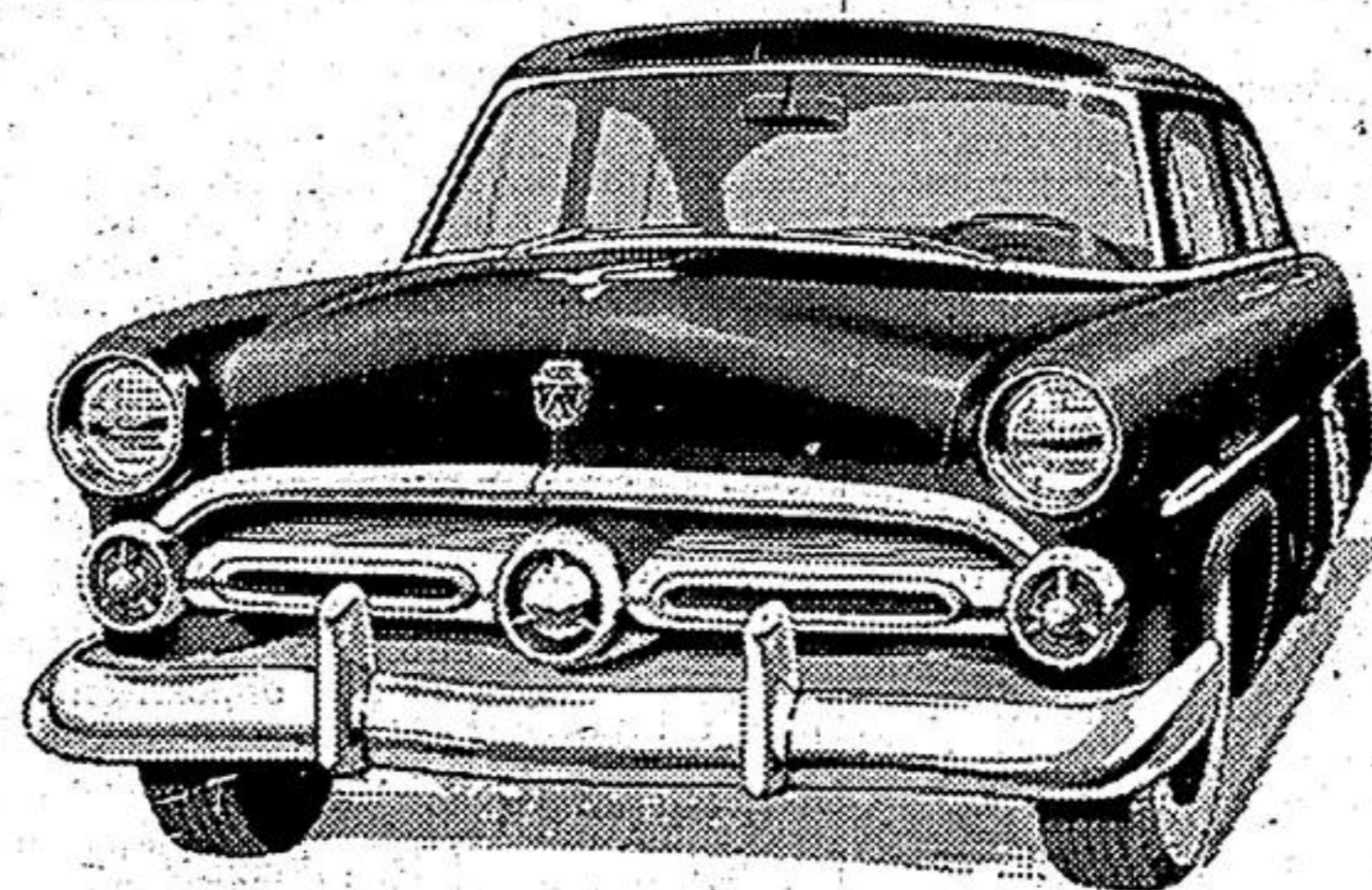
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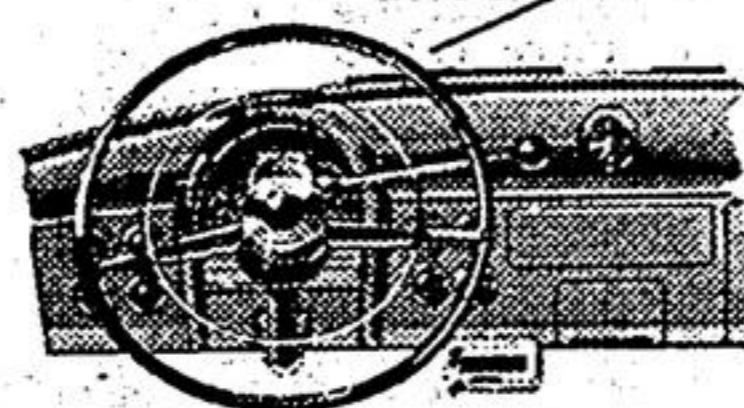
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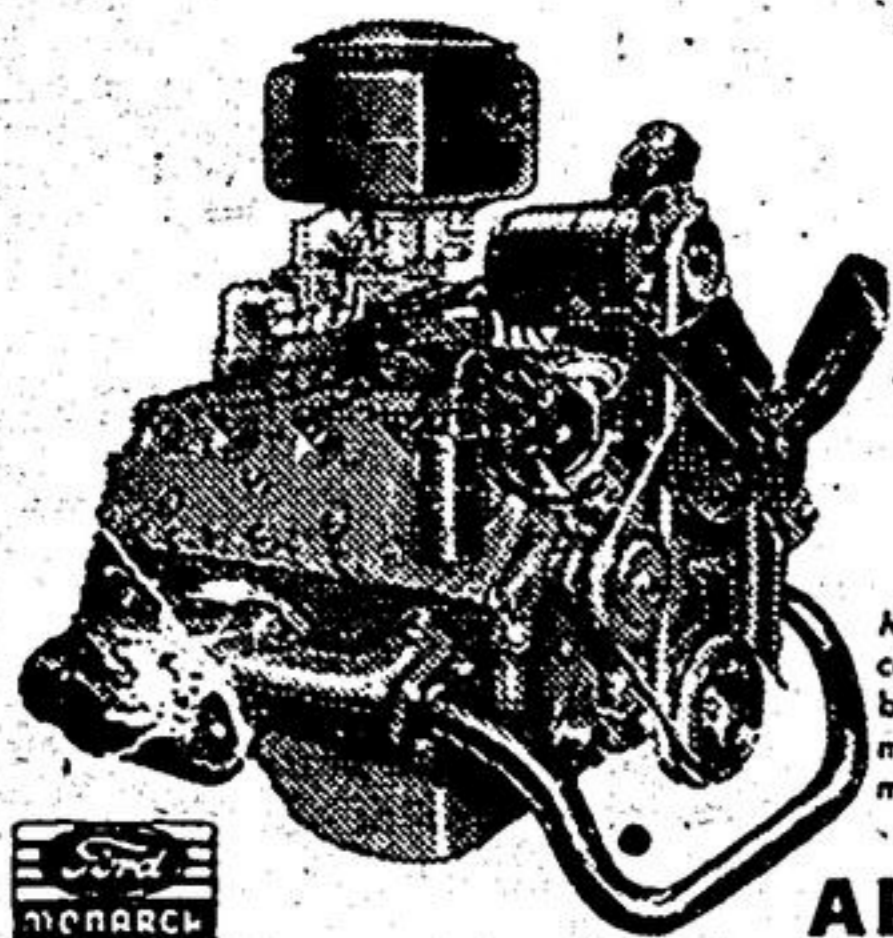
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