

### *Borrowing Authority*

authority, for the information of hon. members, the Minister of Finance set out the government's debt program so far in the current fiscal year and the amount of borrowing authority that has been used. In order to inform hon. members of our current position with respect to borrowing authority, I will take the liberty of repeating what the Minister of Finance said at that time.

Up to January 23, 1981, in domestic markets the government has borrowed a total of \$8.8 billion, \$5.3 billion through the issue of marketable bonds and \$4.6 billion through the issue of Treasury bills, while net Canada Savings Bonds redemptions reduced the amount borrowed by \$1.1 billion. In foreign markets, on balance the government has drawn the Canadian dollar equivalent of \$10.8 billion in Canadian dollars on its standby lines of credit with Canadian and foreign banks. This amount comprises \$1.1 billion drawn in December and currently outstanding and a \$0.3 billion repayment on these lines earlier in the fiscal year.

Since borrowing authority for the fiscal year 1980-81 was not obtained until July 17, 1980, borrowing up until that date was charged to \$2.9 billion of non-lapsing borrowing authority obtained earlier and carried forward. This was reduced to just over \$100 million by July 17 when \$12 billion in additional authority became available under the Borrowing Authority Act, 1980-81. As at January 23, the amount still available under this act was \$5.1 billion. This is more than enough to complete the planned debt program in the final quarter of this fiscal year and a considerable portion of this amount will likely expire on March 31, 1981.

I believe that the information I have just provided along with the information in the recent budget provides members with the pertinent information with respect to borrowing authority for serious consideration of this bill. It goes without saying that when we discuss the bill in committee, much more information will be provided in answer to hon. members' questions.

In closing, I would like to note that this bill is directly and closely related to the budget brought in by the Minister of Finance. I would like to emphasize that when the committee studied the preceding borrowing authority bill the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) had suggested that such bills ought to be tabled earlier and introduced at the same time as the debate on bills which flow from the budget. I believe that the Minister of Finance did get the message sent by the hon. member and this bill is introduced at the appropriate time along with other budgetary measures.

As such the fiscal policy and general economic policy issues have been debated by this House on a number of occasions in September. There were six days of debate following the budget and a lengthy debate on economic conditions on December 18 before the Christmas recess. In addition there has been some further discussion of these issues as part of the second reading debate on Bill C-54 and in Committee of the Whole we

continued to debate the various income tax measures which in a way are all related to the general economic situation.

Some hon. members may recall that on recent occasions the borrowing authority bill has been the occasion for a quite lengthy debate. I might point out, however, that on these occasions the borrowing authority has not been linked to the budget in the way this bill is, as I said earlier.

The borrowing authority bill may also raise issues relating to the government's borrowing program but I will not discuss these matters in any detail now since, as members well know, all of the details of the government's market borrowings are readily available on the public record. I repeat that there will also be ample opportunities for an examination of the government's borrowing activities when this bill goes to committee.

If hon. members grant leave, I would like to table two copies of a document entitled "Background information concerning borrowing authority for fiscal year 1981-82" which hon. members might find useful to prepare the work in committee. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the permission of the House to table those documents.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

● (1240)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** The hon. Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Bussières) has requested agreement of the House to the tabling of certain documents. Is there agreement?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bussières:** In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, my wish is that the House deal with this bill expeditiously and adopt it as early as possible.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) for the courtesy of allowing me to speak first in order to keep an appointment in Toronto.

I want to focus my remarks, dealing with the question of the borrowing authority, on the questions I raised earlier during the question period concerning the determination on the part of the federal government to deal with what it regards as the very unique problem associated with a large deficit, a deficit which produces the borrowing requirements the minister has put before us today.

In respect of this unilateral determination on the part of the federal government to change its role in the financing of certain programs which, up until the present time, have been financed by the federal government, I want to urge upon the minister the importance we attach on this side, as he will know from conversations I have had with him over a period of weeks,