

against small businesses and individuals in rural Canada that can be compared to moves the Mafia would make.

I wish to talk about a few other matters I have heard raised in this House. However, I would be repeating many of the arguments put forward more articulately by other members. These facts are well known to members opposite. They are aware of it and it would certainly be repetitive.

I have listened to the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark), the Minister of Finance, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) and other individuals responsible for this government and its policies. They have been asked whether they were concerned about rising inflation and, if so, would they provide subsidies on bread and milk. The answer was "absolutely not". When asked about the prospect of providing a fair prices review board to control some of the outrageous price increases, the Prime Minister either does not answer or is not in favour of that. He has continuously dodged the question of what they are going to do about interest rates. They keep trying to foist off that problem on the previous government, while at the same time implementing the same procedures of that government. Their remarks are coupled with phrases such as "a lack of sense of direction in this country" and "a lack of confidence". I suggest when they again visit the people to seek a mandate, something they do not now have, that that mandate will not be forthcoming.

**An hon. Member:** Blame it on the gang of four.

**Mr. Skelly:** The gang of four are like saviours compared to this group. We are being asked to approve the borrowing of this money even though we have no idea of how these funds will be applied. I see the Minister of National Defence (Mr. McKinnon) in the chamber. The other day I asked him a question about search and rescue. A great many people have died in my riding and along the coast of British Columbia as a result of a lack of resources to rescue them. Before I vote for any such proposal as this I should like to know whether there is any intention of going ahead with something like a national search and rescue plan. I understand many of its aspects have been cut because the government refuses to spend money on it.

● (1240)

I am curious as to where this \$7 billion is going. I understand that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) and the Minister of State (Transport) (Mr. Howie) visited representatives of a number of shipping companies in Canada and put forward a proposal to repatriate foreign flag ships owned by Canadian companies, and that in the process they were going to forfeit some income tax. Before we spend any money in that direction, give away more of our taxes to acquire things like this, I, personally, would like the government to lay before the House a policy on the direction it intends to take the country in regard to merchant shipping. There is no indication of what we are going to do.

According to the throne speech, we are apparently going to relax some of our taxing power in order to repatriate foreign flag ships, but what we need before we attempt to do any of

### *Borrowing Authority*

that is a statement in this House giving some policy direction on how we are going to establish merchant shipping in this country, what we are going to do about maintaining shipping in the Arctic and developing ports. Before we go giving any further tax amounts away and requiring that we have to ask again, after this \$7 billion, for another \$7 billion, I would like to know where we are going in that regard.

I should like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to put forward some of my concerns about this borrowing bill and the economy in the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to take part for the first time in a debate on a bill presented by a government minister while I sit on the opposition benches. However, it is less of a privilege than it should be on a measure such as Bill C-10 which amounts in fact to giving the government a \$7 billion blank cheque. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if you have ever tried to imagine what the sum of \$7 billion represents. I doubt if Canadians can imagine it either. It is so huge, so extravagant a figure that it remains an abstraction. That figure 7 followed by nine zeros is something absolutely incredible and I am convinced that neither you nor I, Mr. Speaker, will ever have it in our pockets. In fact, if I had it, I do not think I would be in the House this morning.

In any event, we are expected now to give this amount of \$7 billion to the Minister of Finance to do God knows what, since we have not yet seen the colour of the famous budget he has announced high and low and we do not know when we are going to get it.

This \$7 billion authority therefore is the money that this House is going to give to the government, as it can rightfully do, to finance its operations. What operations? I wonder, Mr. Speaker, especially when I consider this new Progressive Conservative government which has made such great promises and painted such brilliant and bright tomorrows to the Canadian public that all hon. members, without fear of making mistakes or being confused by the intricacies of supplementary estimates, should decide, after serious examination, to grant the government the money it needs to finance its priorities.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, after having seen to this date the performance of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) in and outside this House, whether we should thus so easily give him that confidence. During the past three weeks, we have witnessed the sad sight of a government which not only is in deep waters as far as budgetary matters are concerned but also does not know where it is going. We have had the most glaring example when the Minister of Finance refused to appear before the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs to tell the Canadian people about his objectives, those new and famous objectives which the Progressive Conservative government once more promised the Canadian people in the last general election would put the country back on the right