

ity to distribute the resources and benefits in the economy and in society as a whole.

● (2042)

[*English*]

It is very funny that when the government proposes to privatize some services which have proven to be self-sufficient, as for example the program of insurance for fishing vessels, research facilities of the department of fisheries in Halifax and some research facilities for the forest industry, we hear members of the Conservative party particularly criticize and suggest it is terrible to privatize in that way.

An hon. Member: He is not a Conservative.

Mr. Breau: I am not referring to him, I am referring to the Conservative party. They say it is terrible to leave these services in the hands of the private sector. I have been here for a little more than ten years.

An hon. Member: Too long.

Mr. Breau: The hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) says "too long". I have not been here as long as he, so if it is too long for me it must be very long for him. During the ten years I have been here, the Conservative members have been saying we should leave these things to the private sector because the private sector is more efficient and can do things better. When the government does exactly that, members of the Conservative party, including that hon. member from Victoria—I forget the name of his riding right now—

An hon. Member: You mean Esquimalt-Saanich.

Mr. Breau: He gets up and says it is terrible to privatize. I heard him during the question period about ten days ago say it was terrible to privatize some of the research facilities of the federal government.

Mr. Orlikow: And he was right for a change.

Mr. Breau: Hon. members should make up their minds. Either we give more to the private sector or we do not. I do not think the Canadian people or this parliament will be fooled by the people over there who cannot make up their minds and try to be on both sides of an issue at the same time.

Mr. Woolliams: Why don't we go to the country? You would not have an election in the spring or in the fall. Let us have a decision.

Mr. Breau: If the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) wants to speak he should do so. I am sure he is not shy. Normally he is a very good orator. He can get up during debate and make quite a good speech on any subject. I am sure he will continue in that tradition and make a speech if he wants to respond to what I am saying.

I am one who believes the government must use its borrowing power to intervene in the economy. It should use its power to redistribute the fiscal resources of the country in order to ensure a better sharing of the riches of this country. I have suggested to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien), and he

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has told me he would give this serious consideration, that one of the things we should do in order to stimulate the economy is devise a special program whereby the government would help start large industrial infrastructure projects in the field of energy, in the field of fisheries and in other fields that normally are left to federal spending. Because we cannot expect the private sector to do everything. For example, in respect of fisheries we must provide wharves and marine facilities, and in respect of energy we must provide pipelines and other things that will be needed in the future.

Mr. Andre: The private sector is quite ready to do that. You do not have to get involved.

Mr. Breau: The government should help support any project that requires public spending. We have a surplus of manpower, or a surplus in the labour force. After all, that is what unemployment is. We should have a special authority for borrowing abroad, as that will not influence interest rates in the country, using these funds precisely for the purpose of helping the provinces and the private sector in large industrial infrastructure projects which will be needed in the next 20 or 25 years, even if we have to pay higher interest rates. Perhaps many of these projects are not economically feasible at this time, but when considered in the long-term they may be feasibly attractive at some time in the future.

What I am suggesting is that we use our borrowing authority now in conjunction with our surplus in the labour force to start these projects. Many studies have confirmed that within ten years we will have a shortage of skilled construction workers. This means that we will be engaged in large industrial projects requiring a great deal of construction activity and will have to import workers from outside. I suggest we should borrow now in order to start these projects now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill should be passed by parliament for the reasons explained by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) in committee and in the House. First, he had to borrow outside the country, particularly in Germany and the United States, so as to change those funds into Canadian dollars with a view to ensuring an orderly fluctuation of exchange. As the situation of our dollar has improved, we can now sell dollars to ensure an orderly increase. It is important to act that way when there is pressure on the dollar, pressure which is very often speculative. For that reason it is important for the government to exchange foreign currencies from borrowings or national reserves into Canadian dollars to ensure an orderly fluctuation. Even on that issue it is difficult to understand what would be the position of the Progressive Conservative party because every time we had data indicating that the government had converted its foreign currency reserves into Canadian dollars, opposition members and particularly the Progressive Conservatives rose and said it was dangerous for the economy, that it was an evidence of the malfunction of our economy because we converted foreign currencies from borrowings or Canadian reserves into Canadi-