

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from my province.

I do not think this government in any way, shape or form takes any solace in the figures that were released last Friday, except as an indication that perhaps things are getting better in some parts of the country.

We want to see several months of improvement. When one sees a rate of unemployment across this country that high, one cannot take any satisfaction from it. The member from Manitoba and the member sitting behind him from Winnipeg know full well that this situation is going to require a lot more intervention. It affects not only the city of Winnipeg and other cities across this county, but also the farm industry.

Any ways that the member can suggest to improve the efficiency of the grain industry, which is so important to the west and to places like Thunder Bay, Montreal, Vancouver and other ports, will be taken under advisement and discussed with the minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, while we are on the topic of grain cars I would like to suggest to the government member and also to my Reform Party colleague from Manitoba that one of the problems is the fact that we have grain cars sitting all across the country. Many of them are in Manitoba, the old boxcar type grain cars, and they are not being used.

The reason they are not being used is not because of railroads, the government or anybody else. As I understand it, it is because the pools do not want to hire people to man the elevators in order to use the old boxcars. They have cut staff at the elevators.

We have the grain cars to move the grain but the people who are responsible for employment at the elevators will not make it possible to use these cars. That is only one dimension of the problem but I think it is something that should be put on the record.

• (1225)

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, as the member for Winnipeg Transcona knows, the question of grain cars and the use of those cars is also tied into the Churchill route. As he knows, the member for Churchill has been very active in promoting the interest of that route and has been helped by the member for St. Boniface in whose riding the yards are located.

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)):** Mr. Speaker, I found my hon. colleague's speech most interesting. I hope everyone will read it to get a clarification of the wonderful role that has been played to date.

In his next series of consultations, I would ask that the minister please ensure that more women's groups, more older citizens and ethnocultural communities are consulted. I know we did a fair job but not a good enough job in their view. I would hope that some commitment would be made as we go across the country on the next round.

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her comments. I just met on her behalf with a group of women from Winnipeg, a black women's coalition, who brought these types of questions to my attention. They are very much on my mind.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, before I get into the content of what I wish to discuss, I would like to touch for a moment on the remarks of the previous speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary for finance.

He painted a very rosy picture about the future of the Canadian economy. I would like for the sake of balance to point out some of the other opinions on where the economy is heading in the next little while.

First, over the last week we have seen a very volatile stock market. The dollar continues to be extremely volatile. Interest rates have been hiked in the last little while.

When economists comment on this, most often they point out two factors that contribute to this volatility. The first is continued high deficit and debt figures and a lack of confidence in the ability of the government to get a handle on the deficit and debt. The second thing they point to is the situation in Quebec and the possibility of Quebec's separation.

I urge the government to do whatever it has to do to get the debt and deficit problem under control. Though the minister waxes eloquent about the intent to get the deficit and the debt under control, so far the government has not convinced the markets it is going to do this. That is why we continue to have all kinds of uncertainty. It certainly hurts business and the economy in general in this country when there is that lack of confidence.

I will be addressing this bill with respect to the request for borrowing authority for the CBC. The rationale behind that request would give the CBC the ability to invest in systems and equipment that would make it more efficient down the road.

This request begs many questions. The first and most important question is the timing of this request. Right now the government is embarking on a management and funding review of the CBC. This request for borrowing authority presumes the outcome of that review. It is assuming the review will find that the CBC is a good steward of money and that it is a good manager with a solid management team.

I would argue that the facts really do not bear that out. I would point to the fact that the CBC has lost several senior managers in recent weeks. That leaves it weakened in terms of having the expertise to use that money wisely.