

Borrowing Authority Act

many capital projects had completely broken down and that the federal government was committed to some "quite untenable financial situations." Further, the new government discovered that the economic forecasts of the previous Liberal administration were so inaccurate as to significantly misrepresent the actual state of the economy. That is what they have done to the Canadian people in the last 17 years.

The financial skeletons were revealed during the transition between the Liberal and Progressive Conservative administrations. For the most part, the ugly financial surprises were based on information unavailable to the public during the life of the previous administration. The new information placed constraints on policy initiatives planned for the first year of the Clark administration. In place of the previous practice of burying the problem by stamping "secret" on the file, the new government accepted the responsibility of cleaning up the financial wreckage left by its predecessor. But all that has gone down the drain now and they are at it once again.

When the Clark government took office with only two months of the current fiscal year elapsed, 50 per cent of the reserves were committed, leaving a new government with very little room to manoeuvre. Moreover, many of the claims on reserves made by the Liberal administration represented reversals of planned spending intentions. More than \$100 million of the so-called spending cuts of the Liberal administration announced in August, 1978, were reversed between the presentation of the main estimates in February and the beginning of the election campaign in March. Further claims on reserves were the consequences of fundamentally unrealistic economic forecasts of inflation and real economic growth.

● (1550)

I do not think members of the government really understand the role of an elected official, but no matter what level of government, a member's first responsibility is respect for the taxpayer in dealing with his tax dollars. Certainly there has been no respect shown for Canadian taxpayers under any Liberal administration going back to 1963. Canadian taxpayers have been treated with contempt over the years.

There was a real period of uncontrolled spending in the Twenty-ninth Parliament under the Liberal-NDP coalition. In that period federal spending increased by some 50 per cent. One of the largest percentage periods of growth was in that 20-month period. Thus, I get somewhat of a laugh out of members of the NDP saying that they are opposing this closure method, that they do not want to give the government a blank cheque. They certainly had no hesitation in handing the Liberals a blank cheque in the Twenty-ninth Parliament. They are just as responsible as the Liberals for the mess in the country today.

Successive Liberal governments have left us with the following: In 1970 Canada was the third richest nation in the world, behind only Sweden and the United States. By 1978 we had fallen to eleventh place. Under successive Liberal governments the growth in the GNP per capita was one of the worst in the world. We stand eleventh in the list of rich nations today. The

government have managed to let us drop down each year to eleventh place from second and third.

Another record is the unemployment rate of Canada which was 8.4 per cent in 1978. It was the highest of any major industrialized nation. They have broken all records, but their records all go in the wrong direction. They have not accomplished anything of real success. There is more debt, high unemployment, more borrowing, more printing of money, all kinds of empty office space, rampant inflation and duplication. It just goes on and on.

For the purposes of comparing Canada with another country, the United States with ten times the population is concerned about a deficit that is only slightly larger than that of Canada's. They had \$15.8 billion versus \$10.5 billion for 1980-81. The United States deficit was cut in half this year. Unlike Canada, the Americans are likely to balance their budget within the next few years. The record of the Liberals is very disgraceful.

As I mentioned earlier, probably the indexing will be eliminated. This will cause huge tax increases. It will pay for the uncontrolled spending, the \$12 billion debt and whatever. According to many columnists, we cannot rule out tax hikes. Mr. Don McGillivray, an economic columnist, pointed out that he figured the index change would mean a \$1,000 increase, and on and on it goes.

We have another Mickey Mouse arrangement in the House. The President of the Treasury Board wrote a profile a number of years ago. His book was entitled: "Fiscalamity". At that time he was opposed to uncontrolled government spending. He pointed out how it affects the country with inflation and whatever. Then he ran as a Liberal candidate and ended up as President of the Treasury Board. What he said in his book and what he did after were two entirely different things. It is too bad he does not practise what he preaches.

I understand there are a number of other members of the Conservative party who wish to speak this afternoon, so I will bring my remarks to a close and welcome the next Conservative member.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill C-30. As this is my maiden speech, I hope Mr. Speaker will bear with me. Indeed, I hope all my colleagues will.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: I also hope all my colleagues in this House will bear with me if at times I stray ever so slightly from the topic at hand.

First of all, I want to take this opportunity to thank my constituents of Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe who have bestowed on me the great privilege of representing them in the nation's capital. I consider it a great honour and a very sober responsibility to ensure that the needs of Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe are heard loud and clear in this most distinguished chamber.