

Borrowing Authority

concerned on behalf of the Canadian people, when it sees this kind of poor management.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the points I wanted to raise today, when we are being asked to approve a bill that would allow the Government to borrow \$24.8 billion. If that is how the Government spends taxpayers' money, I think we are entitled to ask some serious questions, and I think the Official Opposition will certainly vote against this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with some of the other problems that we are having with the investment of funds in public works and also in transportation. In the Outaouais, there is Highway 50 from Masson to Lachute. The National Capital Commission, through the Department of Public Works, had agreed to pay a major part of the cost of the road network in the Outaouais within its jurisdiction. On the other hand, the previous federal government, as part of regional development spending, had agreed to pay part of the cost of the highway network, more specifically, of Highway 50 from Masson to Lachute and on to Mirabel via Highway 13, Mr. Speaker, and as I said, this was for the purposes of regional and also, of course, economic development.

Here again, the Government of Québec has committed itself several times, and recently, the Minister of Transport, Marc-Yvan Côté, said that the Government of Québec would agree to pay for Highway 50 from Masson to Lachute provided the federal Government contributed substantial financial assistance. I have referred to it several times in this House, Mr. Speaker. I made several requests to the Minister of Transport for him to include it in the next federal-provincial economic development agreement. I trust that the Minister of Transport of Canada and the Minister of Transport of Québec will be able to agree to include this important highway on the Québec side of the Ottawa River joining the Outaouais to downtown Montreal. So I think that it is a very important consideration, and again, when I see such huge amounts as \$24.8 billion, I would hope that the Minister of Finance could find a few cents, a few hundred thousand dollars, if not a few million, to complete the work that they have already began in past years on the Québec side of the Ottawa River.

Mr. Speaker, we were still talking about it at noon today, and I am rather concerned that, as the Minister of Transport was telling us again today, he was still waiting for a report from VIA Rail before he would know exactly what would happen to VIA Rail. I must tell you, Mr.

Speaker, that today we had the mayors of large Canadian cities, including Québec City, Windsor and some in Ontario. And it worries me when the Minister of Transport tells us that we are waiting for the report before the Government can deal with the issue and give the necessary authorizations or leave it to a fate that may be even worse than expected. I think that it is increasingly important to take account of a system that may be very expensive today when the investments that must be made in it are considered but that I think is still a system that should in future cost us less probably and be used more than it is today. It comes down to promoting it and knowing what you want to do with it! I think that our VIA Rail system at present is deficient and outdated and major investments will be needed if we want to improve it.

• (1620)

Mr. Speaker, I conclude with that and say to you that yes, I am certainly concerned about the way the present Government spends Canadians' money. I am even more surprised, Mr. Speaker, when we are told every day, and again today, in advertising paid for by the Government that Canadians have to tighten their belts because the deficit is around \$30 billion and the debt is approaching \$400 billion.

But when we see how the Government manages Canadians' money, we can be even more concerned about the management we are getting now.

I would hope, since we are at the beginning of a term—it is just a few months old—that the promises made to us, made to Canadians during the election campaign, will not all be set aside and that we won't be victims of such a striking example of Alzheimer's disease; that this Government won't forget everything that it promised now that the elections are over and that we won't see such drastic cuts in such important things as social services and unemployment insurance.

[*English*]

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise to speak in this particular debate. We have had five years of unprecedented increases in tax revenues. This should have resulted in balanced budgets. However, government debt has risen to more than 90 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Canadians believed that the Government's budget would naturally cut government spending, but what we have seen in this Budget is the same old thing. In order to maintain prosperity and influence for themselves and their friends they have