

Borrowing Authority

Mr. Riis: This is something that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has amply suggested is unacceptable. This kind of behaviour encourages one to think in terms of George Orwell and the whole concept of Big Brother. Tape recording private meetings—for what purpose? Our colleague from Winnipeg explained in the House of Commons today that during the briefing sessions with his Minister and his deputies there was an individual present taping word for word the conversations that went on. This kind of behaviour does not result in open government and confidence being built in the country.

Parliament is here to represent the people of Canada. Parliamentarians are here to represent the people of Canada and to protect them from legislation that is not necessarily in their best interests. We are not here to feed a habit of a government that cannot or will not say where it is going. Considering the directions in which this Government has indicated it is interested in moving, I find it very surprising that we are being asked for this blank cheque, asking us to buy a pig in a poke.

The kind of directions we have seen from this new Government encourages one to ask questions and to become rather fearful at times about what it has in mind. For example, the Minister of Employment and Immigration is concerned about getting people working. However, one of her very first actions was to hire 700 sheriffs, referred to as a goon squad by one of my colleagues, to find all of these cheaters who are taking advantage of these unbelievable UI benefits. This is probably at the encouragement of groups such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business or the Canadian Organization for Small Business, which recently issued a report stating that 170,000 jobs are going wanting, that no one wants to work because they make all this money in UI benefits.

● (1600)

The average unemployment insurance benefit received by a Canadian is \$153 per week. In a typical urban community such as the ones in which 80 per cent of Canadians live, a typical rental rate for a modest accommodation is probably \$400 to \$500 per month. When the suggestion is made that \$153 per week on average in UI benefits is so generous that people are not prepared to work, I think the Government is receiving some very inappropriate advice.

When the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Beatty) was in opposition, he railed on and on about the Government's heavy hand, its jackboots and its fascist approach to tax collecting. He participated in a cross-country task force and heard story after story about how the tax collectors tried to beat tax money out of the people. What has been the response of the new Minister of National Revenue, the same person who chaired that task force? His response has been to hire 300 individuals to harass those same people who appeared before his task force. That was not quite enough though, Mr. Speaker. He had another good idea.

As the President of the Bank of Montreal said some weeks ago when referring to the corporate sector, a sector which is awash in tax incentives, many of these folks were not receiving all of the possible tax advice on how to avoid paying taxes. The

Minister of National Revenue said that he had a great idea. He is now going to set up a separate tax advice department so that those firms that are not certain that they have identified every single tax loophole can seek some advice and direction to make sure that as much tax is being avoided as absolutely possible. That is the kind of behaviour that starts to make people wonder about the motives of Ministers and the Government.

The Minister of Finance rose in his place and said that he had some great ideas about how to help people and get the economy rolling. The first thing to do was to stop thousands of students from working in the summer by cutting \$85 million from Summer Canada. All of those students from small communities, rural and urban areas across the country would not be able to find summer employment. He said that that was not quite enough because now those students are returning to school so he will freeze all of the student loans and will not expand federal support for students who are going to colleges, technical schools, vocational schools and universities. He then said that a great many senior citizens take advantage of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program by improving their homes and getting more life out of them by rewiring, re-roofing, re-siding or building a new foundation. He said: "Let us reduce that giveaway. Too many people are abusing that system". He cut that program by 25 per cent.

The IRDP was cut by \$175 million and the Government eliminated Tier 1 designation. This means that 50 per cent of the areas of Canada will receive no incentives or encouragements from the federal Government.

Mr. Rompkey: Tourism support is no longer available at all.

Mr. Riis: As my colleague has said, tourism support is no longer available at all. Tourism is one of the obvious future growth areas of the economy.

I think the most peculiar part of the statement made by the Minister of Finance was the suggestion that the Government would cut back on research and development programs and funding to the forestry, fishery and energy sectors. At a time when every single western industrialized nation is expanding its research and development programs, our nation is cutting them.

The economic statement went on to kill Canagrex totally. Canagrex was the Crown corporation that was put in place to assist food producers by ensuring that they have access to overseas markets and by encouraging the development of overseas marketing. The Government destroyed Canartech, another Crown Corporation which was set up to develop conservation programs and renewable energy projects. These are obviously the waves of the future. However, the future does not sit well with members of the Progressive Conservative Party. Therefore, we will not have funding and encouragement for the research and development sector.

When looking at all of the cuts, the arts community has been identified as the one which wanted to be hit the hardest. The cuts to the arts community are twice as harsh as the cuts to any other sector. One could go on and on in an effort to