

Halifax and Saint John should be recognized by the Wheat Board as western grain export ports and be given substantial increases in grain export shipments.

CN should be starting now to build a spur line to handle the shipment of by-products from the Sable Island natural gas and petrochemical industries. More than any other part of Canada, Atlantic Canada needs the job opportunities that could result from a rail electrification program in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The economic betterment of our area should not be disappearing into the western sunset. We need and in fact demand a fair share of the opportunities that are provided in new advancements and technology such as railway electrification. Atlantic Canada must not be forgotten. Let us make an investment now in Atlantic Canada's economic future. To wait until there is an upturn in the economy would be the worst kind of business planning.

● (1120)

In closing, I say let us get on with the job. Let us put our unemployed to work on a make-work program which will really be helpful and bring long-term benefits to our nation. If we follow this course, we have nothing to lose and all across Canada have everything to gain.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, it is very notable that during the last number of days, and indeed one might even say weeks and months, the Government has failed to provide clear answers to any questions which have been raised in the House. As if that were not bad enough, most of the time the Government provides no answers at all.

Mr. Blenkarn: Or false answers.

Miss MacDonald: That is one of the very real problems evident in the operation of our parliamentary system. We either hear Government Ministers making obtuse remarks which do not come to the heart of the issue, or Ministers refuse to provide specific information. As well, we hear Ministers drawing red herrings across every issue raised, trying to diffuse the issues and duck what is being presented to them. We saw that in spades here in the last couple of weeks.

The present piece of legislation, Bill C-143, the Supplementary Borrowing Authority, is in exactly the same category. The Government refuses to provide the answers for the most fundamental of parliamentary procedures, the most basic issue with which we are ever asked to deal, concerning what the Government will do with the money which it is requesting authority from Parliament to borrow.

Just a few months ago the former Minister of Finance made it very clear that he would not ask for any further borrowing authority from the House until a budget had been provided to the House, until the means of raising and spending moneys had been spelled out to us in detail. That is what he said just a few months ago. Once again, the Liberal Government has gone back on its word. Not that that should be surprising; it happens all the time. However, here we have it in spades. We have it in extravagance. The Government, void of any honour, any

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integrity, any courage, has passed up another opportunity to introduce a budget which would at least try to address the financial mess in which Canada finds itself today, in which the economy has been plunged.

Therefore, we are faced with Bill C-143, a borrowing authority Bill which asks the House for authority to give the Government a staggering \$19 billion in additional money to spend. However, there is no budget as was promised. Yes, the Estimates were tabled the other day, but they did not give us a detailed account for the \$5 billion requested specifically for this fiscal year nor for the \$14 billion which will be requested in the 1983-84 fiscal year. There are not even any forecasts as to the need for such increased expenditures.

It is almost impossible to believe, but nevertheless it happens that each time the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) has risen in the House to speak of the fiscal situation in this country, he has told us that the deficit is larger than it was the last time he spoke, and the financial requirements of the Government continue to grow. Now, that amount projected takes us to the edge of a precipice. There is absolutely no control, no management, no restriction coming from the Government benches.

● (1125)

Only as recently as last October the Minister of Finance announced, as the House will remember, and indeed announced with the reaction horror and staggering surprise from the country at large, that the federal deficit had risen to \$23.6 billion. Last week he came back to tell us that the deficit was now \$27.2 billion for the fiscal year ending in March, 1983. In less than four months the deficit had risen \$3.6 billion, almost \$4 billion; or, put another way, \$1 billion for every month since October that the Minister of Finance has delayed bringing in a budget. His waffling and procrastination have resulted, in both financial and human terms, in unparalleled costs, reflected in one-and-one-half million Canadians out of work. The Gross National Product has fallen by 5 per cent during this past year. Bankruptcies among small businesses, among farmers and personal bankruptcies, are up 33 per cent in this past year. High interest rates have economically crippled businesses and individual Canadians. The waffling and procrastination which are hallmarks of this Liberal Government are no prescription for businesses and industries that are crying out to the Government to provide a climate of confidence and stability in the country.

What is needed by the business community is positive, factual information that would lessen the burden of their struggles. With some, those struggles are to expand their businesses. With others, it is merely to survive. Instead, the economic instability and the uncertainty remain; in fact, they grow worse. It confronts us with that uncertainty, that instability, right here today.

Bill C-143 is the largest borrowing Bill, the largest request for money ever to come before the Parliament of Canada. The Government wants authority to borrow \$19 billion but it will