

Government is asking Parliament to authorize, it then becomes even more of a concern.

I will repeat what I said at another time in commenting on this same Bill: every \$1 billion which the Government either spends or borrows, amounts to \$40 per capita. So that with the current deficit of approximately \$30 billion, you are looking at about \$4,500 for a family of four. That is a horrendous amount of money. If we take the \$80 billion anticipated Government spending just referred to by my colleague from Edmonton and relate that to a family of four, you come very close to \$13,000 per family of four in Canada. That is a very significant amount of money in anyone's life, let alone the average Canadian wage earner. In fact, in many areas the Government is going to be spending on behalf of that family of four in the coming fiscal year the same amount of money the major wage earner in that family earns. That gives you a bit of an idea of the amount of money we are talking about. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that if those of us elected to this place did not express our concern over the level of Government spending when it is that high, we would be totally irresponsible and find it very hard to go back to our constituents and explain why we did not at least raise an objection to what is going on.

● (1700)

As I said, it is not the fact that the Opposition objects to Government spending, it is the fact that the Government has given no indication of what the spending is for. If it is going to be for some very useful projects to help create employment and generate tax dollars to replace the money being spent, that is fine. But if it is going to be used essentially to pay for yesterday's groceries, then I think that is something we should look at. The only way we can do that is through a budget. On the one side is Government revenue, or earnings, although I hate to even use that word because Government has no money itself. The only money it has it takes away from taxpayers. So the Government does not earn money. On the other side, we know Government expenditures have been going up at the same time that revenues have been going down, so naturally you have a deficit. What we are saying on this side is that if we are going to address the problem of Government deficits, hence the large borrowing Bill we have here today, we should certainly take a look at a budget to see what the Government is going to do or what direction it is going to take in order to increase productivity so that in fact there are more taxpayers and the Government has more revenue. That would make sense to anyone, yet we do not see this.

We were told that we were going to have a budget very quickly after the first of the year. It is now over two months since the House came back into session on January 17 and we are told that the budget is still weeks or months down the road. We are facing a very critical time as far as Canadian farmers are concerned, and it would be nice to know what the Government plans to do to ease some of the tax burden the farmers are going to be faced with in getting the crops in the ground this spring so that, hopefully, we can give them some encouragement to stay in business and plant another crop. It does not make any sense to me to see the level of fuel tax raised so high that it effectively puts farmers out of business. They end up

Borrowing Authority

having to draw some kind of social assistance to survive, and they certainly are not paying any taxes. Where this money is going to be used is what we should be discussing. How is it going to be used across the nation to create jobs? How is it going to be used regionally?

There are some very pertinent questions we could ask concerning my own area, Mr. Speaker. We want to know what is going to happen to the Rivers air base. It is a small matter relative to the problems across the country, but it is a major concern for an area in my constituency and it would be nice to know if the Government has any plans there. We would like to know where the money is going to be spent on upgrading of many of the branch lines in western Canada. That is a major concern to a lot of people. Yet we cannot get this information. I have written letters to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin), but we do not seem to know what kind of priorities the Government has as far as the upgrading process is concerned. In fact, we do not know which lines are going to have money spent on them this year or what the long-term prospects are.

The last Throne Speech was made on April 14, 1980, close to three years ago, and we are still in the same session. In that speech the Government talked about the Western Development Fund. We do not know what happened to that. There was supposed to be \$4 billion for that fund, but it was cut down. Really, I think the only money which supposedly came out of the Western Development Fund was money for compensation payments as the result of the embargo put on grain sales to Russia after the invasion of Afghanistan. I think it is stretching things considerably to think that that should be part of western development. Many of us in western Canada looked forward to the Fund, and yet we see no sign of that money being made available to develop western Canada. What we do have is a situation where we are looking at reforming the Crow rate, but we do not know when the Government is going to table that legislation in the House.

I am trying to point out to the Government that if we could see some of its spending plans and what it intends to do in the budget, I think the Opposition would feel much better about approving the Government's request to borrow some \$19 billion. All we are saying in this amendment, in lieu of that, is that the Government should have \$5 billion to the end of the fiscal year, but then we should wait until we see a budget and an over-all expenditure plan before the authority to borrow the additional \$14 billion is granted. That to me is a very reasonable kind of approach.

The Minister of State responsible for finance talked this morning about all the programs the Government has in place to assist people in this very trying economic time. That is fine, no problem with that, but it seems to me to be sensible for the Government to put some emphasis on creating jobs and encouraging people to get back to work so that they could become taxpayers and add to Government revenues instead of detracting from them and increasing the deficit.

The Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) talked about foreign capital, and he said that we did not really