

Borrowing Authority Act

receive for working under contract in a federal government building or for an agency controlled by the federal Government.

What has happened since the new Progressive Conservative Government took over? Nothing has happened in terms of the federal minimum wage. It has not moved one cent. What has been the result of that? If we look across the country, we see that the federal minimum wage is lower than the minimum wage of the provinces. In British Columbia, the minimum wage is about \$3.65 per hour; in Alberta, \$3.85; in Manitoba, \$4.30 or \$4.35; in Ontario, \$4.00; in Quebec, which is the highest, \$4.58 or \$4.60; in New Brunswick, \$4.20; in Nova Scotia, \$4; in Newfoundland, \$4; and in Prince Edward Island, \$3.85. Probably for the first time in our history the federal minimum wage at \$3.50 per hour is lower than the minimum wage of every provincial administration. What does this mean? It means, for example, that a security guard from Burns Security in Toronto can work at the Toronto International Airport and earn \$3.50 per hour, whereas when he watches people going in and out of a private office building downtown, he can earn \$4 per hour. Some people might chuckle at this, but it is a very serious matter in that it relates to people with very low incomes.

What will happen in terms of the student employment program this summer? What will happen if a student is referred to a project of an agency of the federal Government on federal property and receives the federal minimum wage, according to the guidelines, of \$3.50 per hour? Such students will say: "My goodness, I hope I don't work for a federal government agency and end up with \$3.50 per hour, because if I work for a provincial agency or private enterprise I will receive \$4".

Perhaps that does not sound like much, but the difference increases in the Province of Manitoba with its minimum wage of \$4.30 or \$4.35 per hour or in the Province of Quebec, which has always had the highest minimum wage, at \$4.58 or \$4.60 per hour. That is a larger difference, it is a difference of over \$1 per hour. Let us think about what that difference means to janitors and security guards who need every cent they can get, to people on low incomes, to people who can just barely make it, if they can, or to students who are saving in order to attend universities and colleges across Canada. For the first time the federal minimum wage has dropped drastically below the minimum wage of every province.

I have listened to remarks in the House concerning the Government following the policies of the Government of the United States. Some of us find it difficult to relate to the policies of the U.S. Government. For example, we find it difficult to understand why that Government took such a protectionist attitude last fall toward exports from Canada. We heard recently about problems with hogs, lumber and various other items. In the riding of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), in my riding and in the ridings of other Hon. Members, the Government of the United States, through its Department of Commerce, has placed quotas on our fish which has been cured, which has been salted. Most companies are

paying a 16 per cent tariff. That is a policy of the U.S. Government, and the Government of Canada has done nothing to object to it. As a result of that great discrimination, people are required to post bonds in order to export products to the United States. This is the first time in our history that people involved in the salted fish industry have had to post bonds. There is a very important meeting going on today in which officials of the United States Government will decide whether the tariff will remain on salted fish.

● (1720)

I say to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) that if that meeting does not produce the result of a cancellation of this improper tariff, if it does not result in having to cancel these bonds that are posted by exporters, he had better get on the first flight to Washington. He had better do that because this is happening with too great a frequency. This is happening in a great many areas of our economy.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser) says that we are considering cutting off the commercial salmon fishery on the northeast coast of Newfoundland. He said that we have to consider it because the U.S. Government asked us last month to do it. Why? Because 1 per cent of the salmon that is caught commercially off the east and northeast coast of Newfoundland is supposed to be destined for U.S. waters. When we take into account the actions of the U.S. Government through its Department of Trade and Commerce and look at a request like that from the U.S. Government to cancel the commercial salmon fishery for Newfoundland, we know what we should do with the request from the U.S. Government.

I have not even reached the main purpose of my address here today. Again, this goes to illustrate the many things that this Government has done that adversely affect the ordinary person, the poor people, what it has done to cut services to the public and to cut down other pensions and disposable income. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, there are so many of these things that you cannot really get to the subject of your address. I am sure, however, there will be other opportunities that will arise when I can do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments? Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer).

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-51, an Act to provide borrowing authority which has been introduced into the House by the Hon. Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall). The substance of this Bill is relatively straightforward. I shall therefore dwell only briefly on its specifics because I wish to address in greater detail the larger issues that it raises.

Last December the Government made a commitment to the opposition Parties that it would introduce a request for borrowing authority for the 1985-86 fiscal year within two weeks of its first Budget. It is a measure of the seriousness with which this Government approaches its fiscal responsibilities