

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1994-95**

The House resumed from March 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1994, be read the the third time and passed.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, although I have spoken many times in the House during members' statements and question period, I am pleased to rise in the House for the first time without a severe time constraint in response to the debate on Bill C-14.

I would first like to offer my congratulations to you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker of the House. I also congratulate all members of the House on their successful campaigns, especially those members who have been re-elected. During a time when the public is growing more wary of politicians being returned to Parliament that is a feat worth noting. It should be an interesting and productive Parliament.

My thanks to the constituents of Kootenay West—Revelstoke for the confidence they have shown in me to be their representative here in Parliament.

I will not take the usual time to wax eloquent about the beauty of my riding. Those who are from there know how incredible it is. Those who are from other places are mistaken in believing that theirs equal it.

It is not the intention of the Reform Party to criticize the government just for the sake of opposition as was often the style of opposition parties in the past. We will be the first to acknowledge good legislation when it occurs. Likewise when we do not agree with the government position we will try to offer constructive alternatives.

We want this Parliament to work for all Canadians, not just whoever makes the best speech from time to time. We stand prepared to work with the government and co-operate on any legislation that is in the best interests of the citizens of Canada.

Bill C-14 is somewhat of an enigma. I recognize on one hand that the government must have funds to operate during the ensuing period of awaiting the arrival of some of the tax dollars Canadian taxpayers have been sentenced to pay. On the other hand I am in a position in which I cannot in good conscience vote to support providing the government with its first instalment of an unacceptable level of spending. What is the alternative?

• (1535)

The alternative is to have come out with a budget based on spending reductions leading to a balanced budget and ultimately

tax reductions. Had this been done Canadian taxpayers, myself among them, may not have felt the same level of hostility about the lack of restraint by the government. I would have been able to support this bill to temporarily borrow funds for reduced levels of spending.

Whenever someone goes to the bank or another financial institution to borrow money, the first thing the lender does is to look at the ability of the borrower to repay the loan. The Canadian government goes to a lot of lenders these days. I can assure members that these lenders look very closely at Canada's ability to repay the loans and they do not like what they see.

When these lenders look at Canada, do they see a borrower who needs to borrow to fulfil a short term shortage?—not likely. Canada has been in debt since the first world war. Do they see a borrower that is paying off its loan? Again the exact opposite is true. Not only are we not paying off our loan, we cannot even pay any of the interest on it.

In 1993 we were going into debt at the alarming rate of \$56,000 a minute. Now one year later and four months into the new Liberal government we are going into debt at the rate of \$84,000 a minute. It would be bad enough if the rate at which our debt was increasing had not improved, but in reality we are heading into a national debt hole we may not be able to get out of, at the accelerated rate of 50 per cent faster than one year ago. This is hardly something to inspire the confidence of the international lending place.

Do these lenders see a borrower that is expanding its business so as to be more profitable at some point in the future? There is no question that in the new budget the government intends to increase its revenues. Does this really relate to the equivalent of a business increasing its profits?—hardly. A more fitting analogy would be a situation where a business proposed to charge higher prices for its goods or services with absolutely no indication that anyone would or could pay this inflated price.

The government's utopian projections are based on so many variables that even a fanatical optimist would be shaken.

The next thing a lender looks at is the credibility of the main players in the company. They want to see if those major players are likely to lead the company to success and solvency or to greater debt and bankruptcy.

If the lenders look at the main players in the government, who do they see? They would see the Minister of Finance, the main financial officer of the government who went on a great tour of Canada to find out what Canadians wanted them to do. An overwhelming number of those consulted and not consulted said we should cut the spending and we should not raise taxes.