

Borrowing Authority

requesting more and more to add to our already escalating deficit figure. It is never ending.

Let us briefly consider the purpose of the latest request for borrowing authority. The Minister has indicated that the money will be used to cover the expenditures outlined in his recent budget. At that time the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) told us that he would need \$26.7 billion to cover his current expenditures. Of that sum total, the Government had already received the authority to borrow \$16 billion under the last borrowing Bill, Bill C-143, leaving an additional \$10.7 billion to cover the remaining expenses outlined in the Special Recovery Projects, additional funding for Summer Canada and other employment programs, and for the Home Ownership Stimulation and Home Renovation Plans. We can certainly provide our support to fund these projects provided they achieve the goals they are set out to achieve. However, recent experience has revealed that many of these programs are only a smokescreen and will not create the number of immediate jobs which the Minister indicated they would, to say little of meeting long-term employment needs, which is desperately required here. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney) has already outlined those inadequacies in her excellent speech given four weeks ago in response to the Minister's introduction of the financial budget. Therefore, I do not wish to dwell further on those. Instead, I will go on to deal with the remaining \$4 billion of borrowing authority which I have not mentioned.

The Government has indicated that it is requesting this additional money as a contingency fund, just in case. Just in case of what? Can the Government not predict its expenditures for the next six months? Does it not know how much it will have to spend on the present programs? If it is not able to do so, then perhaps it should not be running the country.

It appears that we as legislators are constantly being asked to approve requests for additional funds without ever knowing the justification or the reasons. We do not know whether, in actual fact, there is a requirement of the Government for these moneys or for whatever reasons. If there is not a justifiable need for additional funds, then we should not be burdening the taxpayer with greater deficits to shoulder through the addition of interest payments on money which was not needed in the first place. We as legislators should be concerned with the responsible dispatch of tax dollars and the Government must be accountable to Parliament for the tax dollars spent. We must ensure that we have control over the public purse. I fear that we are coming dangerously close to losing that control.

Government Departments spend as if there were a bottomless pit. There are no incentives whatsoever for them to curtail their spending estimates from year to year, thus reducing their budgets. Naturally, each year a Department estimates its spending needs. Rather than turning back any funds it has not expended, projects or non-essential programs are found to utilize those funds. If the money is there, it will be spent. That is why I believe the Government must only request borrowing authority for what is actually needed and justified. Funds should not be requested for what the Government only thinks

it may need. There is a big difference. Until the Government regains its sense of responsibility and justifies its request to Parliament, the country will forever be in debt, mortgaging away the future of Canada.

I appreciated the opportunity of taking part in the debate at this time.

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to follow the speech of the Hon. Member for Leeds-Grenville (Mrs. Cossitt) in this debate in the House of Commons which is of some significance, and I will deal with it. I am glad that the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Bussières) is present in the House, because I will consider the Bill in the light of a matter which was reported in terms of Government revenue today. I want him to be here to listen to what I have to say.

I very well remember the day the Leader of the Opposition and I had the privilege of bringing the Hon. Member for Leeds-Grenville into the House and introducing her to the Speaker. It was a very happy day. She has justified the faith of those of us who helped her in the course of events since she has come here. I think she has shown great concern for the senior citizens, the youth, the unemployed, and those among whom I would call the disadvantaged in the community today.

● (1650)

I am also very pleased to have heard the speech from my friend, the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish). He and I do not kick with the same foot politically. But I thought he was getting awfully close to putting on my shoes when he was worried about the size of the deficit. I want to congratulate him for his conversion, perhaps a death bed conversion, but a conversion nonetheless that warms our hearts when we listen to this kind of change that comes about when the House is considering further borrowing of \$14.7 billion.

I do not know how the Government came to that figure. The Government said \$14.7 billion and some cents. We would be no better than in the position we are. It is a mammoth figure. We have become so used to thinking in terms of billions that we have translated C. D. Howe's "What's a million?" into "What's a billion?". That is what has happened to this Government and its expenditures. Why, Mr. Speaker? It is because this Government forgot the biblical injunction that should hang over all governments that they should store up in the good years against the bad. What happened to this profligate Government through a whole range of Ministers of Finance from John M. Turner to the present Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien), to Mr. Macdonald—what was his first name?

Mr. Fennell: Donald.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Donald Macdonald, now the Bay Street baron who is looking after the interest of our country on that Royal Commission, to the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), to the former Minister of Finance who