

Borrowing Authority

true. However, why does the Minister of Finance condone the raising of taxes, particularly for low and middle income people? The Budget does nothing for agriculture. It does nothing for forestry. In fact, we have seen cuts in the forestry sector, in the compiling of statistics about forestry resources in various provinces. We have also seen a 15 per cent tax applied to softwood lumber on this side of the border. This is why Canadians are convinced that the Government is not strong enough to handle the foreign and trade relations of Canada, which will become a greater problem in years ahead.

We have had the announcement of an ice-breaker three times. One of these days they will get around to getting it on stream.

Mr. Ravis: Thick ice.

Mr. Hopkins: Indeed it is thick ice. I think it is also a lot of red tape and a pretty thick layer of politics. It will be rather interesting to see what comes out of it.

However, the slick Budget of the Minister of Finance is simply a reflection of the policies of the Government and of its attitude to difficult national and regional problems. For all the great speeches we have heard about the reduction of the national deficit, here we are in the middle of a debate about the Government wanting to borrow \$28 billion. We have seen all the government cuts and tax increases. We have also heard the statement of the Minister of Finance that reductions in the national deficit would take place by cutting government expenditures, not by raising taxes.

I will rest my case there, because it could not be more clear.

Mr. Ravis: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins). I returned to the House this week with a different attitude about the Chamber, mainly because I had spoken with many people who are feeling very frustrated about what goes on in the House. I listened to the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer) who laid out in a non-partisan way, as I said earlier, some of the facts about where the country is at today. The Hon. Member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke talked about why we are debating today the borrowing of \$28 billion. Surely to goodness the man must start being honest with himself and with the rest of his colleagues. Why don't we forget for the moment that we are Liberals and Conservatives and look at this issue in terms of what the circumstances are in Canada today. I hate to bring these things into the Chamber, but the Member quoted from an article. We can all do that, we can all zero in on little items and make the Government look bad or make the Opposition look bad. I want to quote Geoffrey Simpson of *The Globe and Mail*. He wrote about "limits to spending" as follows:

The Liberals, they are wont to forget, sent Canada on a spending spree which, coupled with the decline in the government's revenue base, brought on an enormous deficit confronting the new Government.

• (1240)

You do not have to be a journalist or an economist to figure that out. Those are the facts. How can the Hon. Member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke challenge the Government and say it is raising taxes and it is not dealing with the situation as it should be? I cannot figure out what else one can possibly do. No matter how much we cut we will still be facing a very difficult situation in years to come. Cutting Government spending and raising taxes will still not solve the problem. I would like the Member to be honest and just tell us what the Liberals are doing to face up to this issue. They got us into this mess in the first place.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member said, "I want the Member to be honest". I want to tell him that I am honest with my colleagues in this House and I do not think he is in a very good position to stand up in this House and insinuate that another Member is dishonest.

Mr. Ravis: I did not say that.

Mr. Hopkins: He brought that factor in twice. We are facing a great self-righteous attitude. Do you recall what the Hon. Member said, Mr. Speaker? He said that it is time for us to forget about being Liberals and Conservatives. Yet the Hon. Member for Kitchener carried on a tirade against the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson). Asking his question, the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ravis) carried on a tirade against the Liberal Government. You do not ask someone to be mutually neutral and then lambaste them. It does not bother me because I have heard this great philosophy for a number of years and I know from whence it comes.

Mr. Bradley: The Liberal Party.

Mr. Hopkins: The Hon. Member must remember my point that the present Minister of Finance stood before the people of Canada in 1984 and made promises that the Government cannot keep today.

Mr. Bradley: Not true.

Mr. Hopkins: I will give the Tories the credit that they were smart enough to know better, Mr. Speaker. The Tories made that commitment but they are not carrying it out. They talk about annual deficits as though they are total debts. They talk about interest rates. The national debt today has increased by leaps and bounds in the last three years that the Government has been in power. The amount that has increased is certainly not just interest.

Mr. Bradley: It has not increased by leaps and bounds.

Mr. Hopkins: The Hon. Member shouts. If he wants to stand on his feet he will have his chance to say a few words. The Hon. Member better realize that the day is coming when the Government will have to answer to all Canadians for Government assets, Crown-owned assets, which it is selling off