

Government Orders

conclude that four or five years down the road we are going to have a fairly healthy northern cod stock and a fairly healthy stock in 3PS, that area between St. Pierre and Miquelon and the south coast of Newfoundland, the Burin peninsula and Fortune Bay of Newfoundland.

If that is the case, here are my questions. If we are going to be back in five years to where we were three or four years ago, where we had enough fish to keep all the fish plants going, why are we dismantling what is clearly today's excess capacity? Why are we encouraging skilled labour who know how to process this fish to go on to other occupations, and in many cases move out of the community because that is what going to other occupations means in most cases? Why are we dismantling the plant facilities and getting rid of the skilled labour to process those fish, if we are going to need both four or five years from now?

Is it not a much more sensible proposition to keep that capacity and those skills, even if it requires some government dollars in the interim three or four years? Again, I am not asking for the government to find some more money. I am saying to it, why not apply some of the money put aside under the fisheries aid package to address that particular situation, to keep the plants open at Trepassey, Gaultois, Grand Bank, and in St. John's south side?

There are so many issues that come to mind when debating the borrowing bill. I wanted to talk about the government's cut-back in social housing and the devastation those cut-backs are creating. I wanted to talk about the fact that the government is bringing us very close to the brink of a recession, but I am sure other colleagues in this debate will pick up on those issues. There is a great need for social housing in this country and this is not the time to cut back on it.

• (1600)

I am sure others in the debate will want to pick up on that theme. Over the last hour and a half or so, I have had an opportunity to give you some of my views on the issue. Thank you for your indulgence, Sir.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, it is quite an experience to follow a speech of that duration and scope.

Certainly I will not try to deal with the vast range of issues in which the previous speaker indulged himself. However, I would have to say that I find myself in a

somewhat unusual position. In a certain respect, I agree with what both Conservative and Liberal spokespersons have said in this debate so far.

In other words, I agree with what the Liberals have said about the Conservatives, and I agree with what the Conservatives have said about the Liberals. When we are talking about borrowing \$25 billion with the fiscal and monetary mess that this country is in, if we are looking at this question honestly, I think they are each probably equally culpable. We have seen the same kind of tax policies and high interest rate policies in response to inflation from both Liberal and Conservative governments.

Certainly, when we look at this borrowing bill and the amount of money that it represents, we have to be honest about the kind of deficit that this country faces. The kind of interest payments that it takes to maintain the borrowing on that deficit is something that we cannot live with forever. The question is: Who is going to pay down that deficit? Who is going to bear the brunt? In other words, on whom will the pain fall?

I contend that the pain right now and under the policies that have been followed by successive Liberal and Conservative governments has fallen by far the most heavily on low and middle-income Canadians in the outlying regions of the country, in northern Canada, the prairies and the maritimes. The less wealthy regions of the country have borne much more than their share of the burden of reducing the deficit.

In my own province of Saskatchewan, we are in the middle of what might well be considered not only an economic calamity but one that is threatening the whole future of that province. It is a social calamity, a political calamity, a calamity of confidence in hope of the very future of the province. In 1987 we saw 361 business bankruptcies in Saskatchewan. In 1988 we saw 453 bankruptcies. In 1989 we saw 556 small business bankruptcies, the people who create the jobs in that province.

What are these people getting out of the fiscal and monetary policies of this government? They are getting higher interest rates which increase their costs of inventory, the cost of borrowing for any expansion they might want to do in the face of what is already a poor economy, and they are getting the goods and services tax.

I do not think anybody, even on the government side, argues that, in its initial phases and far down the road, the goods and services tax is going to be a disaster to the