

*Government Orders*

There was a time at a news conference when I was a bit concerned because the President of Treasury Board had indicated that there was no agreement for a special committee on this, and he blamed my own House leader at the time as one who did not agree with it. That was certainly not true. Our own House leader did agree with it.

I hope that the President of Treasury Board will continue to agree, as he did in a recent letter to me a second time, saying that he will refer the matter for a special hearing. There are certain things about which Treasury Board has the full right, as the government of the day, to make regulations. However, as we continue here, we should have some in-depth hearings on this because these people are the backbone of government in doing the work and providing a service to Canadians.

Budget matters are closely related to the bill before us today because the borrowing bill supplements what the budget does not provide for. There are many things here that are really very important to Canadians. Again, it is a matter of getting our house in order.

The government of the day is simply passing the responsibility for a larger share of medicare and post-secondary education over to the provinces. This is coming right down to the municipal level in the provinces because the provinces have to transfer more money into providing these other services and they have fewer grants to offer to municipalities. Therefore, the addition has to be made up in the taxation of the local municipality.

The government now admits that it will need amendments to the Canada Health Act to protect Canadians. It will have to use a big stick in the provinces, forcing them to provide proper services to Canadians because the federal government is refusing to give the provinces the cash.

Then we go on to unemployment, where the Minister of Finance in his budget predicted greater unemployment. We are certainly seeing it across the country and we are certainly seeing it in my own region of eastern Ontario.

We forecast that the government would have to raise unemployment insurance premiums to cover the cost of unemployment insurance changes contained in Bill C-21.

The government promised gradual increases. Its interpretation of gradual increases was the 24 per cent increase that it brought in, in the budget, to cover UIC changes. That has hurt small business and it is certainly taken from the people's paycheques.

Training and education have both been hit by the budget. A new study on transfer payments is supposed to come out this spring. I have said before, and I will say it again, that the day is not far off when there will have to be a royal commission once again into the study of the dividing up of the financial pie in this country between the federal government and the provinces. Otherwise, the whole thing is going to be out of whack again.

I am talking about a commission similar to the Rowell-Sirois commission of 1937, which has served us well over the years but which is now being torn apart.

Regional development was not really mentioned. It is going to come later, and we can expect that it will be all bad news. In eastern Ontario we have lost VIA Rail service from Ottawa to North Bay. The forest industry is down. Large numbers have been laid off in that industry. Agriculture is certainly not witnessing very pleasant days in many respects. Industries have closed. Nobody seems to be listening. We do not have any regional development plans for eastern Ontario.

I do not want to burden the Minister of Employment and Immigration any more. I hate to see her disturbed because she is such a nice individual to talk to. She is approachable as a minister, but I know she has been rather upset by some of my comments on that terrible UI legislation.

I want to close by making a tribute to the Auditor General of Canada. I can well recall some of the governments which I supported over the years; we did not always like what the Auditor General said. This government is no different. As parliamentarians, and the Auditor General being a servant of Parliament, there is not a member of the House who should not support the Office of the Auditor General very firmly.

I think Kenneth Dye has served this nation well. I have had the privilege of working very closely with him over the last two years plus, as have other members of the committee. We have found him to be very candid, open, up-front and well informed on his subjects.