

Borrowing Authority

The Minister of Science and Technology (Mr. Johnston) has acknowledged that we have an unemployment problem. These small, short-term programs are not going to solve that problem. We put \$5 billion out here, \$5 billion out there. I do not think many people in this country can comprehend how much \$1 billion is, let alone \$30 billion. Well, it is thirty thousand million. It has nine zeroes after the number. That is an immense sum of money and no one in this country can comprehend it. If our total debt is \$135 billion and we divide that among the 24 million people, you have around \$6,000 for every man, woman and child in the country.

We really cannot go on with this. I expect another borrowing Bill will be brought in in September when we come back or during the Summer, if we sit in the Summer. Where does it stop? We do not know why this money is needed now. Is the Government replacing previous high interest borrowings? If so, I can accept that. But I do not believe they have to come to the House for that. The Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), who spoke just before me the last time on this Bill, has developed, along with one of his colleagues, an excellent program which would really assist us in the House in dealing with our over-all expenditure. It would be a great benefit, but he cannot get the formula accepted by the committee in which he is working. That to me is a shame because we must look at Estimates, we must get them long before the budget, and we must know how each Department is going to function, where the money is going to go, and we should know this well in advance. Instead, all we get from this Government on where the money is going is press releases every day about giving more money away to the different sections of the country. It is very difficult for an MP to keep track of all these numbers. I have a file on them all and I will be using it in the next election because it will show where the money is going.

One thing I am very worried about, Mr. Speaker, is that the private sector has had a very short time to do some equity financing. If we go into the marketplace and start competing with the private sector, that opportunity will be eliminated. Again we will force the private sector cost of interest up and up. The higher it gets, the more the private sector must capitalize its interest costs and the less productive it is. This is the one point to which I am really violently opposed because I am sure that following this borrowing authority Bill our interest rates will rise. It has already been seen throughout the U.S. market, which is experiencing the same problem, but we are just following the Americans. We could have done something better, but we did not. Our interest rates will rise and the country will be in the same morass that we were in less than a year ago.

• (1640)

I understand that my allotted time has almost expired. I have enjoyed the opportunity of speaking to the House on the subject. I regret that we will not be able to stop this borrowing authority with our numbers; otherwise, we would. I am against it. I need more explanation. I need more reasons for the need for this money.

Mrs. Jennifer Cossitt (Leeds-Grenville): Mr. Speaker, it seems as if it were just yesterday that I was standing here in the Chamber debating a Bill in which the Government requested the right to borrow \$19 billion, the largest borrowing authority Bill in the history of Parliament. Now, just a few short weeks later, I find myself rising again to debate what the Government is asking to borrow, an additional \$14.7 billion. So little time has elapsed since then that I clearly remember well my concern. At that time the Government was requesting to borrow \$19 billion. It seemed that my concerns had fallen on deaf ears. I was concerned about the wasteful Government spending which has been going on for the past 15 years. Tax dollars have been spent on advocacy advertising, \$70 million to tell us, among other things, of the wonders of the six and five program, to tell us what a good job the Government is doing. Billions have gone toward bailing out Dome Petroleum and Canadair. I was also concerned about the effects an accumulated deficit of \$134 billion would have on the youth of today and on each and every taxpayer who will have to bear this heavy burden year after year.

It is just a few weeks since I rose in the House, and nothing has been done to alleviate those concerns I expressed. Those concerns still stand today, but they have an even greater effect because the figures have changed. For the seventh time, we are debating the right to borrow additional money. We are now facing an accumulated deficit of nearly \$150 billion and a deficit for this fiscal year of \$31.3 billion. We cannot expect much change in the next four years with a predicted yearly deficit averaging \$25 billion.

Since this time last year, the Government has received authority to borrow \$41 billion to meet such costs as those involved in operating various social programs which have skyrocketed because of the recession. Every three or four months the Government has come and asked the House to approve yet another borrowing Bill. The frightening trend has been established and this financial practice just cannot be allowed to continue. The Government cannot continue to operate under the impression that it will be given additional authority to borrow billions of dollars every time it feels the need to do so.

As was evident in the last Bill and with respect to at least \$4 billion requested in the current Bill, the Government is not justifying the need to borrow funds. Since 1980, a total of \$61.6 billion worth of borrowing authority has come and gone through the House. We are now asked to give authority for a further \$14.7 billion. The Government feels that it should be able to spend and spend without any control over its spending. I strongly believe that the Government has lost all sense of fiscal responsibility it once had. It appears to have lost the ability to budget accurately and cannot work within the financial limits it has imposed upon itself. I am amazed and, at the same time, frightened by the "laissez-faire" attitude of the Government which treats billions of dollars without any concern whatsoever. Those billions are adding up faster than we could ever have imagined, yet the Government keeps