

Borrowing Authority Act

think we can afford it, especially at the rate the present government engages in deficit spending.

Mr. Speaker, I think that passing mention might be made of the present government's abuse of political patronage. I wonder if a part of the \$12 billion might be used to fatten the government's pork barrel. I see more and more defeated Liberal candidates and hangers-on in cushy jobs around Parliament Hill and the government agencies. While I cannot agree with the government's policy of secrecy concerning its blatant abuse of patronage, I can understand why they would want to hide it from public view and scrutiny. It is a national disgrace.

Many of my colleagues have drawn attention to the fact that the Minister of Finance has not yet tabled a budget, and that he will not give us any indication of when a budget will be forthcoming. This is quite a contrast to the Liberals' demands for a quick budget when they found themselves in the opposition. When we did table a budget, they could not resist jumping on the NDP bandwagon to defeat our government and prevent our budget proposals from taking effect.

Now that the shoe is on the other foot, they have the audacity to ask for authority to plunge us \$12 billion further into debt, and refuse to match it up with a budget so that we can see where the money is going. Unfortunately, we do not have the numbers on this side to prevent Bill C-30 from passing, but we will certainly let it be known just how we feel about this matter.

I want to address myself to a subject for a few minutes that has a very personal aspect, one that directly affects my riding and the welfare of my constituents, and that is the matter of regional economic expansion. DREE could be one of the most important functions of government if the present Liberal government had not allowed it to degenerate into an arm of its political machine.

This government has no hesitation in blatantly favouring Liberal ridings in designating areas eligible for DREE grants, and my own riding is a classic example of how the DREE program functions. According to the guidelines used to designate DREE areas, my riding compares favourably to many Quebec ridings that are designated, and yet I have not been able to get one square foot of my riding designated.

On May 14 I had a meeting with officials from DREE in Hull, and I can sum up the results of the meeting by simply saying that I got the run around. When I returned to my office there were two press releases on my desk from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. One announced that \$1,566,250 was granted in respect of five industrial projects in the Montreal area. The other release announced that \$2,724,900 was granted to 12 firms in the Quebec city region. Five hundred and thirty-five jobs are supposed to be created by these expenditures of millions of dollars.

Yesterday I received a copy of the monthly report from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion for the month of March, showing the grants approved in that month. There were 71 grants approved, and 50 of those were in Quebec. The

next highest number of grants approved was six, for projects in Nova Scotia. The others were scattered around the country.

I have made representations to various ministers of DREE over the years, without success, to have the northern part of my riding designated. I have not asked for special consideration or favours. I have only asked that this area be judged by DREE's own guidelines, and that I be given the same consideration under those guidelines as other areas in the country.

I think I can be forgiven for being a little upset when I read press releases announcing DREE grant awards to ridings in Quebec that do not qualify any more for these grants than my own riding. The riding of Mount Royal, in Montreal, for example, is considered to be one of the most affluent ridings in the country, and yet, Mr. Speaker, the riding of Mount Royal is designated as an area eligible for DREE grants. At least a part of Mount Royal is designated, and that is all I have been asking for my own riding—that a part of it be designated.

Last Thursday, May 29, there were two articles on page nine of the Ottawa *Citizen* that would be well worth discussing while we are debating whether to allow this government blanket authority to add another \$12 billion to the current operating deficit. One article deals with the cost of the government's decision to cancel the relocation of Parks Canada's regional office from Cornwall to Peterborough. The other article deals with the matter of more than \$1 billion in cost overruns on about 500 government projects.

To take up the matter of the cost overruns first, Mr. Speaker, I was astounded, as I am sure most other members were, to hear the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) say in this House last Wednesday that there is no need for a special committee to investigate the reasons for these cost overruns. While that might appear to be a matter of little importance to the President of the Treasury Board, it represents more than one-twelfth of the total funds being requested in this bill we are debating. When costs of government projects exceed estimates by \$1 billion, it is a matter of sufficient urgency to call for investigation by a special committee.

On the question of the cancellation of the move of Parks Canada's regional office from Cornwall to Peterborough, it is quite obvious that the government had expected the Liberal candidate in Peterborough to win the last election, and return Peterborough to the Liberal fold. That did not happen, but Cornwall is still held by a Liberal member. Naturally the move was cancelled.

The minister responsible for Parks Canada has said there is absolutely no basis for the charge that the cancellation was politically motivated. I suppose it is mere coincidence that Peterborough is represented by a Conservative, and Cornwall is represented by a Liberal member. Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, let us look at the cost to the taxpayers of Canada of the cancellation.

Treasury Board places the cost of the cancellation at \$1.1 million, and it must be remembered that this is not the cost of the move itself but the cost involved in cancelling the move.