

*Borrowing Authority Act*

helpers in pharmacies rather than providing multinationals with subsidies. Let us not use the student summer employment program which has as its objective trying to enhance a person's career with work relevant to that career as one of the means of accomplishing that end. That is just another reason why the House should be in no rush whatsoever to approve the borrowing of some \$22 billion by the Government. It is really just an extra tax on ordinary citizens.

● (1300)

I remember when the Conservative Party formed the Official Opposition. Members of the Party used to speak loudly and clearly about the Liberals borrowing \$5 billion, \$10 billion or even \$20 billion. The present Government is now doing the same thing. However, it is doing it bigger and more frequently than the Liberal Government used to do in the past. I am sure some of my friends in the Conservative Party who spoke so often and loudly about all this borrowing a few years ago must be feeling very embarrassed for the Prime Minister and for his Cabinet. It is my opinion that, if one takes into consideration the results of public opinion polls, in about two-and-a-half years members of the Conservative Party will be back on this side of the House once again. In the history of polling in the country we have never seen a Government fall so far and so fast as this Government has fallen from favour in the eyes of the Canadian population. It has never happened before provincially or federally. A year or so ago the Conservative Party was sitting at some 55 per cent or 58 per cent in the Gallup poll. It is now in the mid-30 per cent range. It is in a freefall. It is no wonder, since it has broken trust and faith with the people of our country. The Hon. member for Assiniboia being a good red Tory feels the same way as I do. However, he has a fierce loyalty to the Prime Minister of Canada which inhibits him from getting up and speaking his mind.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) for his fine introduction in terms of setting us up for re-entry into Government. It is always pleasant to see such an experienced and learned colleague be so astute in terms of forecasts and prognoses.

In saying a few words on this Bill I simply wish to draw attention to some crucial issues affecting the western part of Canada, which are not in any way countenanced in the types of expenditure patterns we see being proposed by the Government. I find it surprising and disturbing that matters which are of crucial economic importance to major economic regions are ignored in the Bill.

There is a storm cloud gathering which has nothing to do with the late arrival of spring in Canada. That cloud is called the U.S. Farm Bill. It will have the impact of driving down world grain prices by something in the order of 20 per cent to 30 per cent. For western Canadian grain farmers this means that the opportunity to try to recapture some economic benefit, after two very difficult years, will be almost impossible. If one were to project the price of grain for June, which is now being done in the futures market on the Chicago Exchange, one will

see it is down 40 cents or 50 cents from what the price is at the present time.

**Mr. Nystrom:** It is actually 90.

**Mr. Axworthy:** As my hon. friend points out, it is actually approaching 90. This means that the cost of growing a bushel of wheat in western Canada will be close to 60 cents or 70 cents above what will be received for it. There is absolutely no provision anywhere in statements by Ministers or in expenditures of the Government to deal with this eventuality.

A grand opportunity was lost last week when the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) met with the President of the United States. That was when a representation for changes to the American should have been made in order to bring together the major grain-producing countries to try to work out a formula which would not cause a catastrophic drop in world grain prices. As far as we know the topic was never even mentioned. It was not brought to the attention of the U.S. administration. We are now entering a new growing season in which every grain farmer in western Canada is faced with the alarming prospect of having every seed he puts in the ground costing him 30 per cent more than what he can get for it. What a crazy and absurd situation!

The primary test of any Government is not its philosophy or theology; it is how it responds to an immediate, important issue faced by large numbers of people. In this case it has certainly failed the test miserably.

We are now asking farmers in western Canada—in fact farmers right across Canada—to lose a substantial amount of money. Corn growers in the east will face the same problem, just as will growers of other commodities. They will be putting crops in the ground in a matter of weeks which will result in a substantial loss of money. What do we hear from Members opposite in this regard? Nary a word. What do we hear from Ministers? Excuses. What do we get from the Prime Minister as a result of his grand negotiations with the President? A great zero. That is not effective Government. That is the reason the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville is right in saying that we will be back on the other side of the House. We can at least understand the problem. We knew how to respond to it. Rather than sitting silent for the sake of good public relations in Washington and avoiding coming to grips with a major issue we understood it.

Let us look at what is happening to the oil industry in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. As prices tumble, and as the industry slides down the slippery slope the only answer we have from Tory MPs from the City of Calgary is that they will set up another task force, just as their comrades from the east end of Montreal set up a task force to provide for a new economic renewal program. If that task force in Calgary is as effective as the one in east Montreal, God forbid, then I can only offer my condolences to the people of Calgary.

The fact of the matter is that once again there is an immediate and important issue taking place in western Canada which is being totally ignored by the Government. The Minis-