

shoestring budget is not exercising rationally or responsibly his admonition of himself that he is sober in his responsibilities to his constituents.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That is just the amount of the deficit.

**Mr. Mayer:** Not only is \$12 billion a lot of money to borrow, but it is a lot of money in relation to the total spending of this government.

There was mention by the hon. member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie) of what the Americans are doing with their budget. In 1979 the Americans had a budget of something over \$600 billion and a deficit of \$29 billion. This works out to something like 5 per cent of their total expenditure as far as borrowings are concerned.

To relate that back to what we do here in Canada, in the current fiscal year the government will be spending roughly \$54 billion. Of that, we are told we will be running a \$14 billion budget, which leaves approximately \$40 billion that we will be collecting from the taxpayers. If we relate that to the amount of interest which this government is going to be paying on previous government debt, it amounts to something like \$10 billion. Therefore, for every \$4 which this government collects from the taxpayers of Canada, \$1, or 25 per cent, of that is going to be used simply to pay interest on past government debt.

This kind of an expenditure does not finance any new programs. It does not finance any health care programs nor does it increase pensions to those who are in need. It does not buy any new fighter aircraft. It does not do anything that people have come to expect from their government; it simply goes to pay interest on past mismanagement. I find it incredible that we could be so flippant about giving this government borrowing authority to borrow vast sums of money without expecting it to account for what it wants to use the money for and without examining the government's record on what it has done to the economy in the past ten or 12 years.

The previous speaker also talked about being humble in victory and proud in defeat. It seems to me that this government is anything but humble in victory. I have to think that it is arrogant in victory. If the government was anything that approximated humble, it would be very willing to be forthcoming with information as to how it intends to use the money which it is asking us to approve for its borrowing and the government would do this by presenting a budget.

I think the reference to this borrowing authority being a blank cheque fits. There have been many examples used in this House to try to relate billions of dollars into figures which the ordinary citizen can comprehend. In my opinion, "billions" does not mean much to people because it is such a large number that it virtually becomes meaningless. In terms of each citizen it amounts to \$500 per man, woman and child throughout the whole country. For each family of four it means we are being asked to approve \$2,000.

I like to think that I come from a very friendly part of the country. We refer to ourselves as being very hospitable. How-

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ever, I am sure that our hospitality would be strained to the limit if one day a salesman or someone we did not know drove into the yard, knocked at the door, introduced himself and then said that he was sure we did not know him but that he wanted to borrow \$2,000. In addition, he would not say what he would use the money for or how he would pay it back; he just wanted to borrow \$2,000. If we were faced with that situation, I think our hospitality would be strained past the limit and that we would chase that kind of an individual out of the yard. Yet this is exactly what this government is asking us to do.

On thinking about what would happen in that situation, I think the poor chap would deserve some pity and help and we might feel some compassion for him—at least in my part of the country. In any event, that is what is going on when we are being asked to approve this kind of borrowing. In terms of the people I represent in Portage-Marquette, it would roughly equate to \$40 million. I do not know how I could possibly face my constituents if I went home and said that I was perfectly content to sit on my hands and not feel obligated to rise in my place and voice some objections to committing them to paying \$40 million. I take my responsibilities seriously and soberly. For me to do that simply means that I rise and voice my objection to being asked to approve borrowing without any idea of what the money is to be spent for.

I refer now to a remark made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Evans) which appears in *Hansard* for June 2 at page 1670. In closing his speech he said:

● (1630)

I think the time has come for us to move forward on this bill and get on with the business of the House in looking at legislation that is extremely critical, and to stop the kind of delaying tactics that have been used and will be used tonight and tomorrow to stop the passage of a bill which is a fair and honest bill, a bill of borrowing authority the same as ministers of finance have brought down in every government in the past. I think we should get on with the bill, pass the bill and move to other pieces of business.

The parliamentary secretary should be ashamed of himself for making that kind of statement. I am glad to see that he is in the chamber. He stated on behalf of the taxpayers of Canada that we should get on with other business of the House that is critical. To suggest that borrowing \$12 billion is not critical and important to the people of Canada is an irresponsible statement. The parliamentary secretary should take those things into account when making such statements.

Much has been said about the irresponsible spending record of this government. I wish to quote from the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1979. At page 12 of that report, Mr. Macdonell talks about how difficult it is for us to be accountable to our constituents and for the government to be accountable for its actions to the people of Canada unless they have information. This is where he says how critical it is to have information, and I quote:

"the key to accountability is . . . quite simply, information—the openness with which an individual or agency operates and the access to information by persons outside who are in a position to do something about it, if necessary, and the ways in which relevant information is selected, processed, and utilized."