

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 7, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1994-95

The House resumed from February 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1994, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me in this debate today. I recognize the necessity for the government to have a borrowing authority bill passed by Parliament.

• (1105)

The government does not receive all of its revenue from taxes on a specific date early in the fiscal year. Therefore, to meet its program needs when there is a shortfall in revenue it needs to be able to borrow. This is done all the time in the business world. What is new and extraordinary about the situation we in the House of Commons are faced with on this bill is the fact that the government knows now that there will be a substantial difference between revenues and expenditures, some \$39.7 billion on the expenditure side, and has done nothing substantial to move toward balancing its books.

The only thing it has done is sought borrowing authority through this bill to make up the difference.

We were also told on Thursday, February 24, 1994 by the President of the Treasury Board that spending for the fiscal year 1994-95 only went up by \$3 billion. Then he told us if we took out the increased amount to pay the interest on the debt, not the principal, spending only went up \$.7 billion. What is most surprising is that he said this as if it were something to be proud of, some great achievement.

Does any of this make sense to the people of Canada, the people who pay all the bills? I repeat, the people who pay all the bills for everything the government does.

The government, in the overall scheme of things, is going to increase its spending, making a bad situation in relation to the deficit even worse. How can this government justify to Canadians any tax increase which puts more financial burden on Canadians when it will not even begin to put its financial house in order?

What does this government think Canadians want? What does this government think Canadians voted for on October 25 last year? They voted for a promise to create jobs and they voted for fiscal responsibility. If they did not want fiscal responsibility we in the Reform Party would not have increased our numbers from 1 to 52. The government's actions two weeks ago with the budget and the tabling of spending estimates and the borrowing bill will do nothing to create long term, permanent jobs, nor are they fiscally sound.

We have a short term, make work project through which we borrow money to create jobs, but nothing permanent. The president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has said that the Martin budget measures do not add up to a coherent plan that will help manufacturing grow, modernize and reinvent itself for the 21st century.

On the second issue of being fiscally prudent and attacking the deficit now, what are we told by the government? Just like any loser in an athletic contest: "Just wait until next year, or maybe the year after that".

Canadians thought on October 25 that they had elected a government with a plan, a plan for the economy, a plan for social programs, a plan for reworking unemployment insurance, a plan to deal with the provision of better health services. Really what they elected was a government with a plan to study, not a plan to act; a plan to pass the buck, a plan to spend a lot of bucks but no plan to act.

We have the red book but what does it say? It spends a lot of time discussing programs but little time discussing implementation. If the government had plans to implement change, then at least we could see where we are headed in relation to program change and tax savings.

My friend from Lethbridge two weeks ago asked the Minister of Finance when the results of all these studies came in, after the summer break, after these results had been considered by cabinet if he would bring in a new budget, a budget in the fall. The answer was no.