

Borrowing Authority Act

In addition to this are the employees on short-term contracts. Their contracts are not likely to be renewed. We knew that. That was the first thing done. Contracts were not supposed to be renewed. Term employees were supposed to be let go, and we were supposed to have a freeze in the Public Service. I should like to illustrate the potential for further cut-backs. The number of term employees in 1984 ranged from 10,130 to 19,975. The cuts in the public service employment will be much greater than the 15,000. I wonder what the Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney) is going to tell his term employees. I am sure he has some sympathy for those people who have been on term employment with the Government. There are 10,000 to 19,000 people on term employment who are going to be told: "Sorry, we have no more work for you. Too bad. We don't need your services". It is a catastrophic situation. It is a key issue in this area. It is an issue which, if this Government does not address it seriously within a few months, will become a difficult economic situation for all of us in Ottawa-Hull and the national capital region.

● (1420)

Our housing starts are down. The hotels are complaining that their rates of occupancy are way down to 30 per cent from the 70 per cent they used to enjoy. The restaurant trade is going out of business. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the Government has made Ottawa-Hull the target for the cuts and has made it so that the confidence of people living in this area has now been lowered to pretty well despair. They do not know how they will be able to buy a home, take their families out to a restaurant or make purchases in the stores. The department stores sales are also going down. The economy of the Ottawa area is pretty well near a critical stage in their history.

I see that you are indicating I have one minute left, Mr. Speaker. I regret that, but I will have other occasions to refer to this matter. Let me say that I cannot possibly stop the Government from borrowing \$22.6 billion. I do not think I would want to anyway, because if it wants to borrow that is up to the Government. I do not think we would quarrel with that. It is the way the Government is going to spend the money that we are going to look at very carefully. The way the Government is managing the economy right now, as far as public servants are concerned, is a disaster, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Miss Nicholson: I have a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, when I spoke on this Bill at second reading—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret that I forgot we have a question and comment period. The Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson).

Miss Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member, my colleague, who has just spoken, referred to the hopes and the prospects of young people. Would the Member care to

comment on the Government's plan to reduce transfers for post-secondary education and how he sees this affecting equality of opportunity for young people?

Although there is no mention in the last budget speech of these planned reductions, they were dealt with in previous statements of the Government. In a different budget paper, the one prepared for overseas consumption, we find this statement: "The rate of increase of federal transfers to provincial governments for health care and post-secondary education has been reduced". In relation to the Hon. Member's previous comments about youth, would he care to expand on this?

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) for her question. It gives me the opportunity to tell her, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, that I spent my lunch hour at the University of Ottawa meeting with some of my constituents, and also talking to some second year students of political science. That question is uppermost in their minds and it impacts directly on the costs of their education. It is a difficult matter to try to explain in terms of what the federal Government's role is in education, because of the constitutional jurisdiction with which we are faced.

It is a fact that we, the federal Government, pay 50 per cent of post-secondary education. At least that is the principle. The provinces pick up the rest of the tab with the parents or the students. I find it completely unacceptable that the Government, in times when our youth is experiencing difficulty, is cutting funding to the provinces. We are told we could have up to 600,000, possibly 700,000 youth unemployed.

I am not quoting figures that are foreign to this House. It has been said before in this House that there are a lot of others who are not counted because they are discouraged. I happen to have a university, a post-secondary institution and seven high schools in my riding. Many students are very worried about the future, very much concerned with this policy of the Government not giving to the provinces the required funds to support education.

Mr. Daubney: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the entire speech of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) but I did hear the last five minutes. I must say I was disappointed at some of the remarks he made. I have always had a very high regard for the Member. I think his remarks lacked perspective and balance. He made a couple of references to 60,000 public servants losing their jobs, going back to the 1979 scare tactics of the Liberal Party. It is the same kind of scare mongering he is entering into now, and that is very unfortunate.

Mr. Isabelle: What about R.B. Bennett? Go back to R.B. Bennett.

Mr. Daubney: If we look at the history of the Liberal Party in power there have been significant lay-offs year after year after year of indeterminate employees in the public service.