

Government Orders

One of these measures was an infrastructure program, something much bigger than what the Liberal Party offered us. Let me point out here, and perhaps other members will want to react to this, that the federal government is advancing \$2 billion for the infrastructure program, but the federal government is now spending \$20 billion on unemployment insurance.

Look at the dichotomy. On the one hand, we have \$2 billion to put people to work and, on the other, we have \$20 billion for them not to work. I would have expected a much more solid proposal from the Liberal government for redirecting unemployment insurance funds to more productive things that are more promising for the future of all these unemployed people.

At the present time, unfortunately, unemployment insurance is a way to help people survive until welfare becomes their only option. Unfortunately, there is no work once these weeks of unemployment insurance inexorably run out.

The Bloc Québécois's program also sought to redirect a greater share of federal spending to Quebec. You should realize that Quebec pays a total of \$28 billion, more or less, in tax every year and receives the same amount of \$28 billion from the federal government. The problem is that a large part of this \$28 billion is unemployment insurance and what is called welfare. If this money were spent on job creation, and what I am saying applies not only to Quebec but to all of Canada, people who work would pay taxes.

An interesting statistic to which few people refer is the \$120 billion paid by people who work and consume. In Canada, about one in four employable persons does not work, which means that if they could work, they would pay \$40 billion more in taxes and that is exactly what we need to wipe out the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, what are we waiting for to act?

[*English*]

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the words of the hon. member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. He quite rightly points out the very difficult financial situation which exists in Canada.

• (1620)

We have all been through the stages leading up to where we are today. A brief history is that it started many years ago when Keynesian economics were applied to the economic situation of the day creating a national debt. The subsequent government that took over, if it was going to apply that same philosophy, during the years of increased economic activity in this country, should have been taking that money back and paying off the national debt. But it did not. Therefore what was a debt of \$160 billion 10 years ago escalated another \$340 billion over the two terms of office of the previous government.

The challenge has been how to turn the ship around without capsizing it in the process and put us on a new tack. Our Minister of Finance did an admirable job in focusing on the vision in the red book, which we all used during the last election campaign, and in applying it in the first phase of a double budget. My friends in the Reform Party have insisted we have to make more cuts. The government has introduced a multitude of measures.

I fail to understand how the hon. member believes that separation, or as he words it, the sovereignty of Quebec, would help with this financial problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the hon. member seemed to want to go on for a while, and I thought I would have a little time to respond. I appreciate how he put his question.

[*English*]

I understand the sovereignty of Quebec is very important for everyone from coast to coast and believe me, more so for Quebecers.

Something must be said in this House. The Quebec government over the years and for well over a decade has managed its public finances a lot better than what has been done in Ottawa.

Furthermore I am a taxpayer and have been a taxpayer for a long, long time. I have paid my share I am sure, as all the other people in this country are doing.

We send money to Ottawa on the assumption that it will be used to pay the interest on the debt and to reduce the deficit. I was told that. Everyone has been told that year after year after year for well over a decade by all the governments that have preceded this one. We are told that right now by this government.

I send my money to Ottawa on the assumption that it will be used well. When I see it is not, I wonder why I should not give my money directly to the government that has proven in the past to be more able to take care of my finances. By that I mean Quebec. That is why I think Quebec would better administer the servicing of our debt than Ottawa has proven able to do in the past.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, today we are asked to give extensive borrowing authority to a government that has already shown in its first budget that it is not only fiscally incompetent but also fiscally incontinent.

On February 22, while the Minister of Finance was singing into our ears, I could not help but see the ghosts of Michael Wilson and Don Mazankowski coming back to haunt us. We heard all the old platitudes. For example—