

Reduction of the deficit is the only key to a renewal of confidence, and this confidence is itself the key to the creation of more jobs.

In closing, I would like to say that, while our Government made a commitment not to act hastily or lightly, its first and most explicit commitment was to see to it that the state and the economy would operate efficiently in the interests of all Canadians. The years of drifting, hedging and band-aid approach are over. The time has come for Canada to take a new direction and all of us should prepare ourselves for new growth, stable employment and new opportunities.

It is Churchill who said:

[*English*]

"Give me the tools; I will do the job."

[*Translation*]

—we can apply this to ourselves and say:

[*English*]

"We now have the tools; just watch us do the job."

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, this borrowing Bill comes before us with a number of very unusual circumstances. This is a new Government, admittedly, and it has a very decisive mandate from the people of Canada. However, the Government has chosen not to introduce a budget. Instead, it introduced an economic statement during the course of the Throne Speech debate, which deprived us of the customary debate on budget measures. We have no inkling of when there will be a budget and there are some interesting changes in the timetable. For instance, before the election the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) talked as though there would be an economic summit meeting, a federal-provincial meeting, and a budget, all in the fall. Then the timetable began to change a little. The latest news is that the national economic conference will take place on March 22. Apparently the guest list and the agenda for that conference have still not been set. We are told that the consultations in this conference will be crucial to budget planning. If we take this at its face value, we can expect a budget in May or possibly June, which will be too late for a very detailed examination this session. We are being asked under those circumstances to give the Government borrowing authority for two years. We are being asked to suspend judgment, make a blind act of faith and vote borrowing authority for two years.

● (1640)

There are two issues I would like to raise. As my colleague has noted, the officials in the Department of Finance have much to explain about the fact that they gave one set of numbers to the previous government and an entirely different set of numbers two months later. We must have an explanation for this so that we can question those officials before we go much further.

The numbers are suspect for two other reasons, which are found in ministerial statements. When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) was being pressed to release the projections and

Borrowing Authority

the papers underlying his assumptions in the economic statement, he said that he would not release them because they might not be accurate. After being questioned, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Coates) finally admitted that the claimed reduction in expenditures in the Department of Defence was fancy bookkeeping. Considering these facts in total would indeed make any responsible Opposition believe that it is time to have much more information before it can allow this Bill to proceed.

Let us set aside those particular circumstances that are strictly related to the Bill before us. In general, the performance of the Government in the two months that it has been in office has not inspired confidence. We have seen programs slashed apparently for ideological reasons rather than on the basis of rational analysis or sensible program evaluation. We have seen programs cancelled and then reinstated, or a commitment made to re-examine them.

The Government has thrown a cloak of secrecy over its incompetence. It has even been incompetent in doing that. There have been many extra costs imposed by a Government that is claiming to save money. We are told that there is an extra cost of \$250,000 to train political commissars.

We hear some unusual language from the Conservative Government and perhaps we will need a dictionary to understand it. We hear planes being referred to as vehicles of sacred trust or sacred forms of transportation. However, apparently nothing is sacred about the rights of Canadians when we see some of the programs that have been cancelled recently for which we have had little or no explanation. For example, the program for residential rehabilitation was reduced by \$29.4 million. This was a good program for home owners, especially those with modest incomes. It was also beneficial to small contractors, yet the Government says that it is in favour of small business.

We have seen pressure to squeeze money out of low and middle income Canadians. There are charges for social insurance numbers, charges for immigration processing, and charges for security clearance. There are increased charges for citizenship.

We have seen an economic statement that will eliminate at least 50,000 jobs. This is from a Government that was elected on a platform of creating jobs. At the same time that jobs are being eliminated, we see threats to reduce unemployment insurance. Jobs are being created in one area by the addition of inspectors to crack down on unemployment insurance recipients. This is taking place when jobs are being eliminated.

We have witnessed an attack on cultural programs and institutions such as the Canada Council and the National Arts Centre. The CBC was given two weeks to cut \$750 million. How can intelligent and wise decisions be made in such a short time?

We have seen cuts in research and development, including \$34.6 million from the National Research Council. We have seen the health and safety of Canadians put in jeopardy as a result of weather stations being closed. The toxicology centre