

*Borrowing Authority Act*

and firehall—is \$27 million. By any reasonable standard, that amount is not extravagant for the complete modernization of an airport that is nearly half a century old and that the Minister's predecessor described in the House of Commons as antiquated and a disgrace, not only to his Department but to the entire country.

Second, whatever might be the amount being spent on the Charlottetown airport, construction of the new terminal building has not even begun. The project was announced seven years ago, in 1977, with great fanfare by the then Premier of the province, Alex Campbell, and the then Minister of Transport, Otto Lang. Ever since that time construction of the new terminal building has been delayed time after time. Indeed, the present P.E.I. Minister in the federal Cabinet—whom I am very fond of and whom I see in the House today, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Campbell)—has announced tenders for construction not once but several times in the last four years. Yet I have been told by officials within the Department of Transport that construction of the new airport terminal will not begin this summer, next fall or next winter. It is not even likely that tenders will be invited by July 1. This means that the construction of the airport is not likely to happen in 1985 and perhaps not even in 1986. This is almost a full decade, Sir, after the facility was announced with great ballyhoo by Messrs. Campbell and Lang.

● (1620)

The new Charlottetown airport is not a Taj Mahal as described by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy). It is not even a fishing shack. In fact, it is nothing, because no construction has begun and no tenders have been issued. Islanders are wondering, quite rightly, Mr. Speaker, whether they will ever see a new terminal building constructed.

Tourism is the second largest industry on Prince Edward Island. The federal Government, the provincial Government, the City of Charlottetown and the private sector have combined to build a magnificent \$32 million Convention Centre. We are soon to receive one of only four veterinary colleges in the country, thus rendering Prince Edward Island a major educational centre. In conclusion, we need a modern and efficient airport to get people and goods to and from the Province of Prince Edward Island and to help us become more self-sufficient and self-sustaining.

An airport is not a luxury and will not be a Taj Mahal. It is a vital part of the economic base of the province. I urge the Minister of Transport to view this important project in that light. I urge him to consider it as a vital economic tool for regional development. If he is not prepared to accelerate this project and particularly to issue tenders soon, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that after the next election a new Progressive Conservative Government will be prepared to do so.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Before recognizing the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), I would like to inform the House at this time that I am prepared to rule on the amendment proposed earlier in the debate by the Hon. Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling). The Chair finds the amendment acceptable.

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few comments with regard to the Bill which is before us. I do not propose to take a great deal of time. I am delighted that you have chosen to accept the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) inasmuch as I do believe that it is inappropriate for the Government to ask permission of the House of Commons to borrow more money than it can demonstrate it needs to meet the current obligations for the present fiscal year.

As usual, the Government has asked for more dollars by way of borrowing authority than it can actually demonstrate that it requires. I therefore would put it to you, Sir, that if the Government really wants to receive approval for some borrowing, it would be advisable for it to come forward with an alternative piece of legislation. Whether one does or does not favour the concept of borrowing, there is no doubt in my mind that given the obligations of the Government to date and given what we know its obligations will be during the balance of this year, borrowing in some amount will be required in order to meet the on-going financial requirements of the nation.

I have pondered for some time whether government borrowing in itself is the reason for the economic chaos in the country or the consequence of the economic chaos in the country. There is an argument being advanced by members of the Official Opposition that borrowing is the reason for the economic chaos. I am not at all sure that that argument can be sustained in whole. I think that there is a certain element of truth to it but I do not believe that it is in fact accurate to say that all of the problems we now face are the result of the Government's borrowing during the last two to three years.

I think it would be more accurate to say that the reason why we face such difficult economic times is because the Government has mismanaged the economy. It has allowed interest rates to reach levels unprecedented in Canadian history. As a result of that action, hundreds of thousands of people have been driven out of business. There have been more bankruptcies in Canada than we have seen since the depression of the 1930s. Farmers in numbers far exceeding those which faced bankruptcy in the 1930s are now facing bankruptcy and losing their business. Individuals were faced with the inability to meet mortgage commitments on their family homes and were forced to lose all of their investments. I suspect that rather than being the reason for our economic chaos, borrowing is the consequence of our economic chaos.

I wish to look at this situation for a moment in light of what has happened since 1980. In addition to the things which I have already mentioned as being unacceptable consequences of actions on the part of the Government, we have also seen the cost to Government rise dramatically since 1980. The cost that must be borne by the taxpayer either through current taxes or the future burden of the cost of borrowing that we have undertaken as a nation in the last four or five years has risen dramatically. We have seen an economy which operated at 65 per cent of its capacity with a consumer market place reduced