

Time Allocation

Mr. Speaker, the obvious answer to that question is that only a truly Tory Government could carry through on that kind of philosophy and that kind of contradiction.

The Government recently announced in this Chamber that it would no longer guarantee fisheries improvement loans with the banks. Those loans were taken out in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It will no longer guarantee those loans to individual fishermen, and our fishermen are now being taken to court and having their possessions seized. It will no longer support those guarantees. Yet that same Government comes along with a Bill to reimburse those with deposits in the Canadian Commercial Bank in excess of \$60,000. We are talking about rich people here. Some of those who will benefit from this Bill are millionaires.

Of course, the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation guarantees deposits of up to \$60,000. But now the Government of Canada turns around and says that while it is not going to name any of those who will benefit, it will reimburse those individuals and companies which had deposits in the Canadian Commercial Bank in excess of \$60,000, together with any interest that would have been earned up to a certain point in time.

Mr. Rodriguez: A money-back guarantee.

Mr. Baker: A money-back guarantee, yes. Mr. Speaker, that certainly is not acceptable to the Canadian people. We have, on the one hand, a Government that refuses to guarantee the loans of fishermen because the banks went over a certain limit and, on the other, a Government that is willing to reimburse those who had over \$60,000 in deposits, and they are willing to give all that money back to these individuals and companies without even telling the Canadian public who they are.

Just imagine how a fisherman with nothing at all in the bank feels! When the farmer in western Canada or the fisherman in Newfoundland goes to the welfare office to apply for benefits, one of the first questions asked relates to how much money that individual has in the bank, and if there is any money in the bank, that money has to be spent before that individual can qualify for benefits. A farmer or fisherman applying for welfare cannot even have money in a child's bank account, money earmarked for that child's education.

The Government is saying to our fishermen that it will no longer guarantee their loans with the banks; that because the loans have gone over a certain limit, the courts will now be permitted to seize their property. It is saying that it can no longer support a guarantee that it put in writing seven years ago. And yet that same Government is now proposing to pay off millionaires in respect of a situation where there was no guarantee. There was no guarantee to reimburse those people for potential losses as there was in the case of loans under the Fisheries Improvement Program. Yet here we have the Government of Canada proposing to spend over \$800 million to reimburse the depositors in the Canadian Commercial Bank. And we hear: "What's \$800 million?"

In giving an account of the problems of the banking sector in this Chamber, the Government Members toss around figures. We hear: "Oh, it's only a billion." They never come clean; they never say how much everything costs.

The Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation is broke, and has been since the PCs took office. It is about \$900 million in the red.

An Hon. Member: You are treading on delicate ground.

Mr. Baker: The hon. gentleman says that I am treading on delicate ground. Let me tell the hon. gentleman that the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation will have to borrow from the Bank of Canada and as a result of that borrowing rates on deposit insurance will increase.

But there is still money, Mr. Speaker, coming from the Government of Canada. A billion dollars here or there does not really matter. But only for a certain class of people. For the poor farmer, the poor fisherman, the poor logger, the people who keep this country going—much more so, Mr. Speaker, than do Members of Parliament or a great many other professions—there is no money. Mr. Speaker, we want to know to whom this money is being given. Once we have that information, we will decide whether or not they should get it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the bank bail-out Bill, and I am particularly concerned with the fact that the Government is now proposing that there be a limit to the debate on this measure, thereby not allowing for adequate discussion of the subject.

Canadians are increasingly concerned about the security of their banking institutions. We have had in the news word of the possible failure of the Mercantile Bank, with talk of a merger or buy-out of it in order to save it from difficulties. The failure of the Northland Bank followed, in rapid succession, the failure of the Canadian Commercial Bank.

We are very concerned about some of the implications of these failures, and particularly that of the Canadian Commercial Bank, the biggest bank failure we have had to date. Canadians have cause to ponder how their institutions are being run.

For a year preceding the failure of the Canadian Commercial Bank, the president of that bank was an American who was resident in California. We have to wonder who is tending the shop.

We have been presented with an appalling list of erroneous, inadequate, and imprudent banking practices, including lending practices and decisions about the areas in which loans would be made by that bank, and that situation prevailed for a considerable period of time.

For the last entire year of that bank's history, it did not have a president who was at home guarding the interests of Canadian depositors and shareholders.