

*Time Allocation*

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure anyone watching this afternoon would not have the faintest idea what we are doing. I cannot help but wonder at the way in which the arguments have been presented. The arguments themselves are certainly valid, but they are not relevant to what is before us. I want to talk about why time allocation is being brought forward and why we are opposed to it.

The Government has done two things. In the time that I have been here, at least, the Government has developed a pattern of asking for all of the borrowing authority in one Bill and asking for more than it can reasonably justify at the same time. On this occasion it has asked for \$29.5 billion for the fiscal year 1984-85. It is not only a lot of money but it is \$4 billion more than the Government can justify on the basis of its own accounting.

On top of that, it is my conviction, a conviction shared by most of my colleagues, that if the Government is to be accountable it ought not to ask for all of its projected borrowing needs at one time. There ought to be an opportunity during the course of the fiscal year for Members of Parliament to judge the performance of the Government on the basis of its borrowing needs and to pass judgment as to whether the Government has managed the affairs of the nation in a reasonable way, whether it has borrowed only for those which can be seen by the majority to be necessary projects.

● (1700)

This time we did what we have always done and attempted to present an argument to the Government. We recognize that the Government, whether it be the Liberal Government of the day, the Conservative Government of yet another day or a New Democratic Party Government, will from time to time be required to borrow money. However, we feel that it is important that the Government not be allowed to borrow at any time more than it requires for six months. We presented that argument to the Government. It has been put forward by myself and by many of my colleagues. The Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) and other members of the New Democratic Party who speak on finance matters regularly have often argued that borrowing authority for six months is all that the Government can reasonably expect to receive through one Bill. That would mean that at this point in time, the Government would require an amount not exceeding \$15 billion and probably something less than that.

Had the Government brought forward legislation along those lines, we would have been prepared to deal with it reasonably and expeditiously and to have proceeded to the other important matters that ought to be taking up the attention of the House of Commons. We offered the Government that argument and it was not accepted. We were then asked to look at the possibility of a need for borrowing authority for more than six months, because this is an unusual year and there is the prospect of an election looming. It was thought that perhaps under these circumstances the Government ought to be given authority to borrow for more than six months but

less than a full year. We considered that argument and on the recommendation of my colleague, the finance critic for the New Democratic Party, the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap, we thought that allowing the Government authority to meet its needs and commitments for nine months or until the end of the calendar year would be appropriate in the circumstances.

I know that my colleague the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), a Member who is constantly involved in matters such as these, was a little doubtful about whether we should extend the period of time to nine months. However, after considerable discussion, even he agreed. He is known throughout the House as being a frugal man who is vitally concerned about fiscal responsibility. In fact, all Members of the House have paid tribute to the fine work he did on the committee which studied fiscal responsibility and fiscal transfers.

In any event, we agreed among ourselves that we would extend the amount of time to nine months. Had the Government been willing to bring forward legislation along those lines, we would have accepted the request for authority to borrow a sum of money in the order of \$18 billion or \$19 billion, with the requirement that the Government return to the House of Commons to request the additional borrowing authority that it required when it required it and if it required it. We think that that is an appropriate approach for a government to take to borrowing, whether it be this Government or any other government. I suspect we will never find out whether the Government would have accepted that argument or not. We did in fact move an amendment to a motion to that effect but it is not likely to be accepted.

The public of Canada, who may well be riveted to their television sets with the eager expectation of seeing a vote take place in the House of Commons very soon, should understand what this is all about. I think that by explaining the situation as I have, perhaps they now appreciate that the reason we could not give approval to the borrowing of \$29.5 billion or \$29.6 billion is that it is more than the Government has proven it needs and it is for a complete fiscal year. We disagree with that in its entirety. We draw the line at that. Therefore, using the only method available to us, we had our speakers rise and, in an intelligent and compassionate way, explain what our position was and beg the Government on frequent occasions to consider that position and accept it as reasonable. However, the Government has, for one reason or another, failed to respond properly.

I do not think that the public of Canada would want this Government, the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of British Columbia in particular, the Government of Ontario or any other government, to be given *carte blanche* to borrow far more than it needs. It is therefore incumbent upon us to make sure that that does not happen. It is because of our opposition to allowing the Government to do so that the Government has chosen to use time allocation.

I am not like members of the Conservative Party who say that time allocation is an inappropriate tool. It exists in the