

*Borrowing Authority Act*

The level of incompetence on the Cabinet benches is so high that it would be irresponsible for members of the Opposition to endorse this kind of borrowing. The Government simply has not demonstrated good accounting practices. The Auditor General of Canada continues to take the Government to task but it has not come forward with proper accounting procedures.

All this has dire consequences for the forest industry in my riding. It provides an enormous volume of wood for direct export to Pacific rim countries. The Watson Island pulp mill and Eurocan are among the largest suppliers of world price pulp in Canada.

Northern British Columbia is now in the early years of what is called the "fall-down effect". The federal and provincial Governments have allowed the forest companies to do what Professor Walters of the University of British Columbia Forestry School describes as the gang raping of the forest resource. According to provincial government cabinet documents, there will be a more severe and earlier fall-down effect than was previously expected. That means that in less than five years we will have to reduce by one-third the amount of wood being cut on forest lands. The federal Government has been negotiating with the Province of British Columbia for a five-year reforestation plan directed at northern British Columbia, the interior and the Kootenays, all of which have been badly managed, overcut and underinvested.

Federal Government advisers in the Canadian Forest Service say that it should be putting at least \$130 million per year into reforesting back-log lands. British Columbia was promised at least 40 per cent of that money and that would mean between \$50 million and \$60 million per year from the federal Government if the Province of British Columbia would advance the same amount of money. But the Premier and his Minister of Finance have put forward false figures and have lied to the people of British Columbia about the size of the deficit. They say that over three years it is \$2.48 billion, but the Department of Economics at the University of British Columbia has confirmed that the real deficit for the province is less than \$100 million. The Premier and the Sacred Party who are associated with the Tories nationally have simply cooked the books. That is the nicest way of putting it. In northern British Columbia that means that when the provincial government says it has to practise restraint, it fires provincial forest employees and gets rid of public servants. At the same time the provincial ombudsman is pointing out that as high as 10 per cent of the wood cut in British Columbia does not draw stumpage charges because it is not being properly scaled by the government. We are losing on that as well.

Let me finish by saying that in terms of the reforestation agreement, the Government's officials say that it should put in between \$50 million and \$60 million of federal money. The province will not put up any money so the federal Government says it will not play either. That is not good enough, Mr. Speaker. Last year the federal Government took almost \$700 million so it must put forward that \$50 million which will

create 2,000 jobs at \$25,000 per year in northern British Columbia.

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21 would give the Government authority to borrow \$29.6 billion. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) have indicated that they believe Canadian agriculture is not in serious difficulty at the present time. I would dispute that. Regardless of whether agriculture is doing well or not, I should like to present to the House some calculations which relate the \$29.6 billion debt to agriculture.

The average income of a Canadian farmer is \$9,000. It would take a farmer 3,288,888 years to repay \$29.6 billion. I think it is beyond the physical capacity of most farmers to achieve that goal. Even if it were spread over all farmers in Canada, it would mean 10.5 years. That is to say that all 320,000 Canadian farmers would have to work full-time, using all of their earned net income against the debt, to pay off this single borrowing Bill. They would have no funds left over for clothes, additional food or recreation and they would have to work full-time for the Government for 10.5 years.

The Government is not just any borrower but a special borrower. It has the right to tax people, to tax things that move and things that do not move. It has the right to tax things that keep us warm, things that feed us, things that clothe us. In some cases taxes are imposed on things that would raise questions with you and me, Mr. Speaker.

There have been many questions raised in the House recently about the activities of Revenue Canada. A good example of the extremes to which the Government or its tax collectors might go is the recent effort by Revenue Canada to tax a dead man's clothes by trying to exhume the body and take his jacket off. That situation actually occurred, Mr. Speaker. It is an example of the difficulty and the pressure the Government is under because of past borrowing and of the extremes to which it will go to collect taxes.

What happens to the money that is collected? After using it and putting a very significant administrative cost on it, the Government puts it back into the country using means which it hopes will persuade people to re-elect it. The Government has been very successful in a number of ways. In fairness, I know that the Government at least intends to provide social measures for the benefit of all Canadians. It has been very successful in providing one particular social program which is not discussed very much, and that is spreading the debt.

On the basis of this single borrowing Bill, in 1984 the Government can claim to have achieved a goal never achieved by any other government. It has spread the national debt so that every Canadian, man, woman and child, owes \$6,026. That is a very significant social accomplishment. We should not forget that the debt is also carried by senior citizens, the unemployed and the handicapped. Indeed, anyone who might feel that they might have been neglected by society until now will know that they are treated equally and that they share in carrying over \$6,000 in debt. Next year they will carry \$7,210