

Borrowing Authority

To back up this comment I want to share with the House the results of a questionnaire that I sent out to my constituents last month. I asked whether deficit financing—and I explained what it meant—would be preferred to a reduction in Government spending. A staggering 99.8 per cent of respondents chose a reduction in Government spending and emphatically wrote in every response that Parliament must take action in this regard. I believe that the wishes of my constituents are indicative of the wishes of Canadians in most other parts of the country.

The need to get federal Government spending under control is obvious, Mr. Speaker. The problem is: if a majority Government, like the present Liberal administration, refuses to act in this regard, what can be done?

First, I believe that a special all-Party parliamentary committee should be struck forthwith to do nothing else but deal with Government expenditures. It should be able to come to Parliament, take specific action and have Parliament take the necessary action to reduce spending, and it should insist that Parliament listen to the recommendations of the Auditor General. Only then will Parliament and Canadians be able to fulfil their potential.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak briefly on Bill C-143 which is before the Housing asking for borrowing authority in the sum of \$19 billion. Recently when I was in my constituency, a constituent who came into my office shook his head and asked how it could be that the Government would come to Parliament and ask for \$5 billion in this fiscal year and some \$14 billion for the next fiscal year, when no statement whatsoever had been made of the Government's priorities and objectives for this money.

Surely that is the fundamental question before us as we debate this Bill today. No one in this House would suggest that if the Government is prepared to come forward with sensible objectives for spending money to create jobs in difficult economic times, Members would resist it. However, we take strong exception to the Government saying, "Trust us. We want \$14 billion for the next fiscal year ending March 1984 but we still will not tell you what our priorities are." I suggest that that is an irresponsible approach to financing this country, and certainly I believe that the question my constituent asked has not yet been answered by the representatives of the Government in the House today or on any other day.

There are a number of areas of concern about this proposal. As the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) put it, basically we are being asked to buy a pig in a poke. We are being asked to authorize the Government to spend \$14 billion in the next fiscal year when we do not have the confidence that the Government will spend it wisely. In fact, the record of the Government is such that I do not believe it should be authorized a single penny until it indicates a fundamental change in its priorities.

There are still some 2 million Canadians out of work and literally millions more who, while they have a job, are working in an atmosphere of insecurity and fear of losing it. There are

thousands and thousands of Canadians who are in part-time jobs and who are not using their full skills, and so their talent is being wasted.

What has the Government proposed in terms of priorities and job creation? Mr. Speaker, it has offered no real alternative whatsoever. It is clear that the major victims of the Government's lack of priorities on job creation are women and young people. These are the groups that are disproportionately affected.

We are not talking about short-term job-creation programs, important though they may be. In the last few months the New Democratic Party has put forward a number of proposals for creating jobs in the short term. We have come to grips with the fact that in a civilized society today, every Canadian who wants a job should be entitled to a job. It is absolutely and fundamentally immoral that 2 million Canadians, half of them young people, still do not have work. Not only is it immoral, but it does not make any economic sense.

We have seen the Estimates with respect to Unemployment Insurance for the coming fiscal year. We know the cost of welfare in all Provinces is increasing dramatically. Recently, an article in the *Vancouver Sun* indicated that one out of three residents of British Columbia presently receives all or part of his monthly income from some sort of Government assistance. On this side we advocate that Canadians should have an opportunity to work. They want that opportunity; they do not want to be on the welfare rolls or collecting Unemployment Insurance. Not only does that have an economic impact but it also has a profound social and personal impact.

I could give many illustrations, as I am sure all Members of the House could, of the devastating consequences of the failure of the Government's economic policy, but I shall just give a couple.

About two weeks ago in my constituency office I received a telephone call from a grandmother. She was phoning because she did not know where to turn, she said. Her grandson has just graduated from UBC where he had spent six years getting a degree in applied science. He is a qualified engineer, but some eight months after he graduated he is still looking for a job. What kind of society is it or what kind of Government is it that would permit that tragic waste of human potential?

● (1510)

There are many illustrations, as I said. There is the 56-year old gentleman who got off the bus in Burnaby and came into my constituency office. He sat down and said "Mr. Robinson, after some 30 years in the same job I have been laid off. I have lost my job, not because I did not do a good job, not because I did not want to work." He had lost his job simply because the downturn in the economy was such that his employer could not afford to keep him on any longer. Also he said, "How do I go back home, face my family and tell them that we will get Unemployment Insurance as long as we are entitled to it, but after that we will have to go on welfare?" There are far too