

Borrowing Authority Act

read every newspaper I could lay my hands on. Very quickly, Mr. Speaker, I gained a tremendous respect and admiration for the prime minister of the day, 12 years ago, who happened to be the same Prime Minister as today. It is a privilege that I did not expect to come my way those 12 years ago to be standing here today as a colleague of the Prime Minister of Canada.

There is no question that the Prime Minister's political longevity is a direct tribute to his honesty and integrity over the years. I hope it is also a tribute to the kind of men and women he has attracted to run for this party under his leadership.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: I cannot, in all good conscience, Mr. Speaker, rationalize the negativity that constantly emanates from that side of the House of Commons—negativity toward Bill C-30 and negativity toward everything this government would undertake as part of its mandate from the people to serve the people. Perhaps there is an explanation for the negativity we have seen in something the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Mackasey) touched upon in this House a few days ago.

I remember that during the February 18 election campaign I spent one cold night in Corner Brook talking with my grandfather. During the course of our discussion about my chances of election and who was going to form the next government, etc., my grandfather gave me what I think is very sound advice. He told me that if I lost, then I should be proud in defeat. I should be proud of the effort I had made. He also told me that if the people were kind enough to bestow their confidence upon me and I won, then I should be humble in victory. I think that is sound advice, Mr. Speaker—to be humble in victory, and proud and dignified in defeat.

The people of Canada spoke on February 18 and while we on this side, I believe, have been humble in victory, hon. members opposite have been everything and anything but proud and dignified in defeat. Sadly, instead we have seen a kind of bitterness and a vindictiveness that I am sure has clouded their ordinarily good judgment and has poisoned what would ordinarily be their good will to participate in the House of Commons.

We on the government side recognize the necessity for a good, effective opposition in the House of Commons. We would welcome good, effective and constructive opposition. But if that is not forthcoming, then we have no time to play games. That is why I voted for time limitation on this debate on Bill C-30. That is why I support Bill C-30 so we can get on to other important matters.

● (1620)

I have one final piece of advice for members opposite before I sit down. It is simply this: I suggest that right now is the time for members opposite to swallow what has become in their own minds that very bitter pill called defeat.

Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, I would like to reserve the right, after reviewing what the last member said in terms of his use of the words "dishonesty" and "cowardly"—this is in reference to the representation that he made toward this party with regard to our position on Quebec—to review the blues for further consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The Chair will certainly respect the right of the hon. member and support the right of the hon. member to make that review.

I might add that one hon. member whose advice is often sought in that regard, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Neilsen), has mentioned to me privately the same concern. My recollection was, and I believe it to be the case, that an accusation made directly to a member, of a member or about a member that he or she is dishonest is unparliamentary language and out of order. But a reference made to a political party or a group where the word "dishonesty" is used has in fact been ruled acceptable debate.

The Chair does not want to enter into the fine points of that difference. I only raise it to assure the hon. member that the matter is of some concern. I did warn the previous member on the subject. I will on behalf of the Chair undertake to assure the hon. member that his point of privilege will not be lost, and if he chooses to bring it up tomorrow he will be heard.

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Mr. Speaker, it is a duty that I have to fulfil on behalf of my constituents to rise and speak on this bill.

From my recollection of when I studied history in my school days, the reason we have Parliament is to be accountable to the people of Canada, the people who elected us on their behalf. We are accountable to them for the tax dollars that the government collects. It is the duty of every elected representative to see that those tax dollars are spent wisely. But when the government of the day comes before us with a bill asking for permission to borrow \$12 billion, and at the same time, upon requesting information from it as to what use the government will put the \$12 billion, we find it very difficult to get that information, then I find it rather strange that the previous speaker should talk about taking his responsibilities soberly. He apparently finds it very easy to rise and support a bill that really gives the government a blank cheque in terms of borrowing \$12 billion. I think all of us as elected representatives of the people take our responsibilities very soberly. I know I take mine very soberly and that is why I feel compelled to speak on this bill.

The previous speaker said that he is operating on a shoe-string budget because of the situation in which he was left by the previous government. I do not know where he comes from or what kind of situation they are in in Newfoundland, but in Manitoba \$12 billion is anything but a shoe string budget. In fact, it would account for roughly six years of total expenditure by the province of Manitoba. The hon. member should be very careful when he talks about a shoe string budget and relate it to the amount of money that is involved. It is a tremendous amount of money, and to refer to it simply as a