

Borrowing Authority

The Government now wants to borrow another \$19 billion but will not tell us why. It did not have to ask for this money in one sum. It could have split the Bill in two and obtained our authority to borrow enough money to see it through to the end of the fiscal year, then brought down a budget and introduced another Bill to borrow for its remaining requirements. As well, it could have produced explanatory material along with this Bill as it stands. It could have brought in yet another of its celebrated mini budgets, of which we have seen so many since the fiasco of November, 1981.

Of course, several other Members have mentioned that a budget has been promised to be delivered on various dates. I understand that the budget will probably not be brought down until early May.

Since the Government could have taken any of these steps, why did it not do so? Is it that the sinister suggestions of some of the public at large are correct? Is it that the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) musings on yet another occasion were correct and that in his eyes we are just a bunch of nobodies? Perhaps so, but we are still the last and sovereign authority over the public's pocketbook. They, our electors, have assigned us that responsibility, and it is to them that we are finally accountable.

Parliament once fought long and hard, and bloodily I might add, to be the sovereign authority over the public purse. We do not do service to either our for bears or our successors if we surrender that privilege lightly now. Perhaps the Cabinet has lost so much control of the economic, political and every other situation with which it is faced that it has just lost its grip. Perhaps that is closer to the truth.

The point is that for whatever reason this Bill is being brought forward in this fashion, there is no justifying it if we are collectively to fulfil our moral responsibilities to our electors. Whatever the reason for introducing this Bill, even if it be simply incompetence and lack of control, it militates against our continued confidence as the appointed delegates of our constituencies in this Cabinet's management of the country's affairs.

There comes a point at which every person must consider the true interests of those to whom he is ultimately responsible. I would suggest to all of us here that this Bill must mark that point.

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, the context in which we enter this stage of debate on Bill C-143 is that the only sector of our economy that is not practising restraint and setting intelligent spending priorities is the federal Government. In that context we are being asked to make a great leap in faith. In the same context we are being treated daily to new and more senseless examples of the Government's free wheeling spending. The Government is oblivious to the strains being placed on the backs of Canada's taxpayers.

The Government has come before us today to ask for authority to borrow \$14 billion for the taxation year 1983-84. Of that, \$5 billion is being requested to see it through this current fiscal year. Under what terms are we being asked to

vote for this authority? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) asks us to trust the Government. He has said that the Government will not even allow us to continue debate so that the public may hear us, and will impose closure. He says, "Trust us". We are asked this on the basis of a sheet, a Bill, one page with a little bit of print, compared with the Bill on tax increases, Bill C-139, which was nearly two inches thick.

• (1750)

Just a few months ago, let me remind the House and those who share this concern about the financing of our nation, the Minister's predecessor in the Finance portfolio very emphatically told the House:

I would not expect the House to act upon an additional request for borrowing authority without providing it with detailed information on the economic situation and the implications of that situation on the Government's fiscal situation. I do not think that it would be appropriate to ask the House for additional borrowing authority until I have laid out in some detail an update on both situations. . . . I will certainly be doing that before I would come back to the House for additional borrowing authority.

Where are the explanations? Now we are told, "Trust us. Wait for a budget, which may be late in April or may be now in May. In the meantime, we will close off any debate and discussion on the matter".

I will not go back to my constituents in the Waterloo riding and tell them that I voted for Government authority to borrow \$19 billion when it would not give the country any idea as to how it planned to use it. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that those in the Mennonite culture which I represent, the people of Germanic and Scottish ancestry in the Waterloo region, do not understand what it is to vote for something concerning which they are given no details.

I will not trust the Government with that authority when it has already spent over \$1 million on newspaper ads to tell us just how close we are to energy security. I am reminded, as I speak in the House today, that nearly 7,000 homeowners in the Waterloo region have seen money spent by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to let them know that this same Government approved of the use of urea formaldehyde foam insulation in their homes. Certainly, those taxpayers have so little regard for the word of the Government, so little trust in the Government which is asking to borrow \$19 billion, that many of them, I find day by day, will have nothing to do with the new Government-approved programs to remove urea formaldehyde foam insulation from their homes.

I refuse to go back and tell the post-secondary graduates of Conestoga College or the University of Waterloo or Wilfrid Laurier University that I voted to trust the Government which has overseen an economy which cannot provide thousands of these capable and trained young people with employment of any kind, much less in fields in which they have long studied. They have already trusted that the Government would be of some help, would find some context so that they could feel they were contributing to our Canadian society. However, what do they find? They have almost no hope of jobs. Make-work programs give them little sense of satisfaction and little hope