

Borrowing Authority Act

● (1610)

Temporary employment as defined by Statistics Canada is employment for less than six months. It can be part-time or full-time. It is distinct from permanent employment which is for a term of more than six months. Unfortunately, in its survey, Statistics Canada does not inquire whether a person is employed in permanent or temporary employment. Employment figures cannot be broken down to employment for two hours a week or 40 hours a week. You are in the same bag and you are all counted among the 580,000 figure about which the Prime Minister brags.

Statistics Canada produces unemployment figures for the Government. One day the Prime Minister stood in this House and used those figures. I went home and picked up the local paper to see that unemployment had increased dramatically. In my riding, the Government is paying people sums of money to quit work. It is called incentive retirement. Not only is the Government paying people to quit work, but the Government is doing away with a job every time it does that and that increases unemployment.

Parts of Canada are suffering from such cut-backs. Other parts of Canada are not experiencing those things and think we have the greatest thing since sliced bread. This is something which I cannot possibly find words to describe. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) has absolutely refused since May 23, 1985 to meet with a delegation of business people, municipal leaders, professional scientists and labour leaders from my riding who are very concerned about the cut-backs and the loss of jobs at Atomic Energy of Canada in Chalk River.

Sums of money are being offered to people to retire. They are being offered to people below 55, even those in their early fifties. Every time this is done, jobs are cut.

Here we are in this House talking about the progress of Canada at a time when the Government is cutting back on some of the finest technology Canada has ever had.

There is no better time than in a finance debate to talk about the contribution the Government is making to the field of national defence. We remember all those promises in the last election campaign. The Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Andre) came to my riding and said that the Government was going to increase the defence budget by 6 per cent in real terms, after inflation. Do you know what the Government has done, Mr. Speaker? It has not quite sunk in yet in people's minds, but the Government has kept its promises so well that in the present fiscal year it has not even met the rate of inflation. There is negative growth in the defence budget this year of minus 0.2 per cent.

We sat for days in the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. You would think there was no tomorrow because of the way the Conservative Members talked about all the wonderful things the Government was going to do for national defence. They even said that we should increase our budget up to the average of our European allies. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian dollar amount going

into defence is 2.1 per cent of our GDP. If we increase that to the level of some of our European allies, that budget would have to go up to 3.8 per cent of the GDP. Do you know what that would mean, Mr. Speaker? An increase of over \$7 billion in the defence budget. How serious can you be? At a time when you have a total committee going gung-ho for that kind of an increase in defence expenditure, the Government comes up with less than the rate of inflation.

We have a frigate program to complete. We have an order for 138 fighter planes to complete, which are coming on stream well. We have 81,000 small arms coming on stream. We have 2,761 five-tonne trucks that have come on stream, all of which orders were signed by the previous Liberal Government.

What is going to happen to the low-level air defence systems? An article in *Le Devoir* this morning said that the system might be cut in half or pushed aside for a while. I mention all of this because this is the Government that for years condemned the Liberal Government for not carrying its weight in NATO.

Mr. Blenkarn: It didn't carry its weight.

Mr. Hopkins: If that is all the math the Chairman of the Finance Committee knows, we should get a new chairman because he cannot add and subtract.

Mr. Blenkarn: You didn't carry your weight.

Mr. Hopkins: In 1979 there was an agreement to increase the defence budget in real terms by 3 per cent on the part of all NATO countries. I tell the Chairman of the Finance Committee that in 1980-81 the increase was 3.2 per cent.

Mr. Blenkarn: Why didn't you do it before?

Mr. Hopkins: In 1981-82 there was a 3.1 per cent real increase. In 1982-83 there was a 5.3 per cent real increase after inflation. In 1983-84 there was a 6.4 per cent real increase. In 1984-85, the last term for Liberal budgeting, the defence estimates increased by 8.9 per cent in real terms. In the first year of the Tory Government, defence spending growth in real terms was minus 0.2 per cent. The Chairman of the Finance Committee—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. I am very sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has now expired.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say a few words regarding the borrowing authority Bill which the Government is asking our permission to pass. The Government is asking us to borrow \$22.6 billion, which is a considerable amount of money to borrow. It is the largest borrowing request ever brought before the Parliament of Canada at one particular time. It deserves fair consideration and a fair debate.

I have had the opportunity to spend the last number of days in my constituency. I had reaction from people of all political