

Government Orders

Senate of Canada, God forbid in this day and age, has more support right now as an unelected body than the government opposite. The Senate knows that the government's economic policies are leading to economic and regional tensions that we simply do not need.

One of the aspects that I want to talk about concerning the UIC bill is how this government comes in and talks about how it is trying to make the system more fair. I spent Saturday in the communities of east Preston and north Preston. These communities are the largest indigenous black communities in Canada. They have been there for many hundreds of years. The economic problems that they find themselves with are problems that could be addressed easily by a government that had the wherewithal, the courage and the political will power to deal with them.

I am speaking directly to the members opposite. There is a major problem in that community. It is six miles from the largest metropolitan area in Atlantic Canada. There are over 5,000 souls who live there. It is the largest indigenous black community in Canada. They have suffered for far too long from a lack of attention by successive governments of whatever political stripe. We are now in a situation where this community is crying out for assistance. If I have a 7 per cent unemployment rate in the city of Dartmouth, they are suffering a 30 per cent unemployment rate. There is systemic racism, a thing we never like to speak about either in this Chamber or elsewhere. There is systemic racism at work. There are young blacks in that community who see themselves with no future and have asked repeatedly for the federal and provincial governments to sit down, take some of the billions of dollars we are talking about today, and direct it into the community. They are ruining lives out there. This government and the government of the province of Nova Scotia are ruining the futures of many of those individuals because they have the economic and policy tools to make a real difference.

I have been dealing with the minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Hopefully, we are making slow progress. I have met on at least one occasion and have spoken to the minister of employment twice in the House about putting some flexibility into the programs. As yet, the flexibility is not there.

Today in *The Daily News*, one of the largest distribution newspapers in the metropolitan Halifax—Dartmouth area, there was an article on the front page with a big headline. One of the councillors, Mr. Wayne Adams, who is a member of that community, said that if governments do not act soon and use the resources that are theirs to give the community the tools it needs to get out of this collaring which has taken place for two centuries in that community, there will be major problem and perhaps civil disobedience.

I call on the members here when we are dealing with all these government expenditures to put a little heart in their deliberations on the other side and to put a little pressure on members of their cabinet so that when we talk about those who need it the most, not just regionally but in the sense of some minority groups across this country, they do not all suffer equally under the knife of fiscal restraint. If everybody suffers equally under the knife of fiscal restraint some bleed a lot more than others, and they are members of minority groups across this country and people that live in the poorest regions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clément Couture (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to make a few comments on Bill C-65 to provide borrowing authority. Here is how I would express my views. It is quite obvious this time around that if the government needs to borrow \$25.5 billion to meet its cash requirements it is due to the fact that the problem is not recent and dates back to a number of years. Let us go back to the early 70s when the government could operate with a \$300 million budget surplus and a national debt of \$17.2 or \$17.3 billion. It was at that time that the expenditures of the Canadian government began to rise dramatically. Expenditures went up by something like 17.9 per cent. For the second term they increased by 10.1 per cent because the government had decided to cut back on its own outlays. Over the third term, from 1980 to 1984, the annual increases averaged 14.1 per cent. Needless to say all these higher expenditures put a lot of pressure on the government's cash requirements.

In 1984, when the Liberal government was defeated, we took office looking at a financial statement showing an annual deficit of \$38.3 billion and a national debt of about \$200 billion. We finally took over as a government with a plan of action and a definite goal. The government had put its cards on the table and was quite prepared to