

Government Orders

That is what the people of Dauphin—Swan River voted for. They have a right to expect no less. That is what we will deliver.

There are a number of initiatives already undertaken by the government which I am sure the people of Dauphin—Swan River will view favourably. The cancellation of the helicopter deal was a campaign promise that was kept. The conclusion of the GATT negotiations will be a particularly encouraging sign to the farm families involved in the grains and red meat industries in Dauphin—Swan River and in western Canada. These industries require ready access to export markets and cannot help but be pleased at the prospect of an end to the international grain trade wars.

The hon. minister of agriculture should be complimented on his handling of the very sensitive final stages of the GATT negotiations.

The mayors, the reeves and their respective councils of the towns and rural municipalities in Dauphin—Swan River are anxiously awaiting responses to their applications on the infrastructure program so that they may use the jointly funded program to the advantage of their communities and of course to create jobs.

Let us now look at some of the additional provisions of the budget speech itself.

• (1645)

In addition to the infrastructure program there are a number of provisions which will be viewed favourably by the people of Dauphin—Swan River: the government's commitment to economic renewal and job creation through the establishment of a new internship and apprenticeship program and the establishment of a Canada youth service corps; the government's commitment to research and development, particularly agricultural research; the government's commitment to the development of an information highway which could be of great consequence to the future development of rural Canada; the government's commitment to establish a centre of excellence for women's health; the government's commitment to establish a national forum on health chaired by the Prime Minister; the government's commitment to a consultation process to replace the GST; the government's commitment to enhance the opportunities for small and medium sized businesses in the Canadian economy; the government's commitment to provide stability in transfer payments to the provinces.

All of these commitments are clearly reflected and are provided for in the budget. All of these provisions will be viewed positively by the people of Dauphin—Swan River. They will be seen as a constructive step forward in fulfilling our election promises.

Finally we have a government which will restore honesty and integrity and openness to our institutions of government.

Finally we have a government which is prepared to give the highest priority to job creation and economic growth.

Finally we have a government which is committed to strengthening the social fabric of Canada.

Finally we have a government which is committed to the sound management of our nation's financial affairs not to just talk about it, but to do it.

The Deputy Speaker: Congratulations to the member on her maiden speech.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to represent my own convictions, those of my constituents and millions of other Canadians.

I rise to voice my profound concern over an issue of the highest import. Other issues pale into insignificance compared with the substance of Bill C-14, an act to provide borrowing authority for the next fiscal year. If it is passed the bill before us will authorize the government to borrow up to \$34 billion, adding still more to the debt that is already without precedent in Canadian peacetime history, an astronomical sum which is difficult for us to even comprehend.

It troubles me deeply that this bill has received so little attention and so little talk on the other side of the House. We need the attention of the nation today. We need all members in this House, members who are watching on television or reading *Hansard* to sit up and notice the incredible event that is taking place.

It is obvious that the government considers this bill a fait accompli, a routine proceeding, just a boring formality to thrust this legislation in the face of an indignant opposition, listen awhile to its useless tirades and then pass it without second thought. The government has adapted easily to the incredulous thought of borrowing \$34 billion.

We all enjoy the ability to adapt to new situations. Adaptability is a coping mechanism and it allows us to live in truly abnormal ways and yet somehow develop a frame of mind which sees a situation as normal even though circumstances are far from it.

We see people with major disabilities get on with their lives and live happily. On TV we watch the kids in Sarajevo tobogganing the day after the shells stop falling. This is a good quality. It allows us to make the best of a bad situation.

This ability to adapt also has its downside. We can become desensitized, unable to detect the lowering of standards about things which would have shocked us just a few short years ago. That same adaptability allows soldiers to shell children in Sarajevo and find it acceptable.

Somehow I fear that this ability to adapt has enabled this government to descend into a fiscal frame of mind that allows us to think the unthinkable and accept it as normal. To illustrate, let me quote from the Auditor General's report of 1976. He said: "I am deeply concerned that Parliament and indeed the govern-