

Taxation

The Minister of Finance brought in a package that he said would open up the budget process. Read it and you will see that the clam still stays pretty closed. There is even some opportunity for a little skulduggery. I am not accusing the minister of that, but there is that opportunity.

If the economic and tax committee of this House of Commons had first had an opportunity to hear the forecast for the economy that was released on budget night, do you believe it would have approved the National Energy Program? Do you believe that if the members of this House of Commons, experienced in the ways of this place and some experienced in business, had been allowed through an open budget process to give advice to the government on what economic policies should be followed; they would have approved a National Energy Program such as we have? Do you believe the members of this House of Commons are as stupid as the government and would accept a recommendation the likes of which was reproduced in the budget of November 12?

Is there anyone in the House of Commons who believes that the members of the House would advise the Minister of Finance to take such a stance from which he would have to retract and suffer the humiliation of having to withdraw at one crack 17 sections of a budget which had been touted as the best thing since sliced bread just a month before? Day after day, as surely as every day passes on the calendar, one little thing is withdrawn. My friend from Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) told me that 30 items have been withdrawn from that budget. Does that show confidence in the Minister of Finance, the Department of Finance, and the government?

If we had an open budget process, do you honestly think the House of Commons would have given that kind of advice to the Minister of Finance? No. That would not have happened. That is what happens when you play your cards close to your vest. The Minister of Finance played his cards so close to his vest that he got ingrown cards. That is the problem.

I know my time is coming to a finish. However, let me say that this government is so undeserving of the double whammy on the Canadian taxpayer that is contained in Bill C-93 that it is not the intention of this party to allow this to occur. I hope, before this debate is finished, that some backbenchers on the other side will have the guts, courage and concern as well as a feeling for the people who sent them here, to stand up on their hind legs and say to the Minister of Finance, "Enough, withdraw this abomination. Rethink it for the good of this country."

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad to have an opportunity to speak in this debate. I want to begin by saying that it is very difficult at this point in 1982 to consider giving the government borrowing authority. It is very difficult for me, as a representative of an industrial area that is suffering untold miseries, primarily as a result of this government's economic policy, to consider seriously granting to the government the right to borrow even more money, more money that they will spend, undoubtedly in the same way that they have spent much of the taxpayers' dollars that have been raised over the course of the past few years, and many of the

dollars that they have borrowed over the course of the last few years.

I spent four days in Hamilton last week, Mr. Speaker, and I must confess that they were four days of immense educational value. I met with people from almost every walk of life. I set up meetings from early in the morning on Monday last through until late on Thursday evening of that same week. I met with young people in high schools. They asked me where they were going to find a job when they graduated at the end of this winter, where they were going to go to find employment, employment they had to have in order to begin to realize the dream that most of us have considered until now to be a reality—that dream that if you work hard in Canada you can provide for yourself and look forward to a reasonable future.

I went from there and I sat down with manufacturers of shoes, to discuss with them the problems they were having, problems of trying to maintain a viable industry in the face of low-grade, cheap imports. These people were asking, not that the government stop the imports, but simply that there be a reasonable quota allowance of imports into Canada. Why? Because they wanted to protect those jobs in that community. They wanted to try to roll back the lay-offs that had become the order of the day in the shoe industry. They wanted to try to find a way to avoid the problems that had overtaken almost half of the entire industry across the country, much of it in the province of Quebec. They were asking for government assistance at this point, but not in the form of dollars, they were not looking for handouts. They were looking for understanding, they were looking for an opportunity to do what they do well, in the country that they have chosen to operate in, provide jobs for Canadians, top grade footwear for Canadians, and guarantee that there would be some stability in the industry.

I say this to you, Mr. Speaker, that they made the point: "Oh, yes, it may be true today that you can get a cheaper shoe or a cheaper piece of footwear from offshore" but they said to me, and they are right: "On the day there ceases to be a domestic manufacturing sector, the price of the footwear from offshore will automatically go up. The only thing keeping that price down at the moment is the fact that they are trying to undercut the Canadian manufacturers and put them out of business." That is true. And the government, for reasons I do not quite understand, are prepared to allow this to happen.

I left Susan Shoes, but I will come back to them later. I left and went to sit down with the chief executive officer, the president of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and we talked about the problems of rationalizing the rubber industry. We had a discussion about their efforts in international markets all over the world. We talked about the rationalization process that they had undertaken. They pointed out to me—something that I already knew—that they had been able to increase the level of employment in the Hamilton plant from 1,100 about a year ago to almost 1,700 now. That was done on the basis that they were going to rationalize their productive capacity in such a way as to cut costs. They were going to be more productive, they were going to meet world markets.