

*Government Orders*

sitting there in retirement funds that we have to borrow back at 13 per cent and 14 per cent.

The Minister of Finance asks about our alternatives. We hear that plea all the time. There are two aspects of that plea that I find distasteful. First, the government was not elected to stand up and defend itself by demanding other members tell it what to do. If it is that weak then the best the minister can offer is to resign. If he has no plans of his own and asks the opposition "what are you going to do" then he has given it up. Pack it up, call it quits and leave.

One of the things we can do in this country is to use indigenous funding, our own country's money to supply that part of the capital pool that is necessary for long-term jobs; not welfare and the waste of welfare, not handouts, not megaprojects, but useful long term jobs that keep men and women in their own communities.

When I talk about restructuring our urban communities, I would moderate my criticism of this method of fund-raising if I could see this money being seriously and thoughtfully used for a social and economic purpose.

The government members stand up and lament what is happening in Atlantic Canada. I lament it, too. However, if we were to turn \$35 billion of that \$71 billion of RRSPs that is non-directed into municipal bonds, there would be \$5 billion available tomorrow for Newfoundland and \$5 billion available for the other Atlantic provinces. That would create a heck of a lot of jobs in a hurry, with pride, with self-respect, and with decency.

Is there a community in this country that is looking for low-cost bonding to keep their tax base down but cannot find it? There are plenty of them. The impact of high interest rates and lack of indigenous capital in this country is forcing municipalities and school boards to raise taxes right across the board.

The minister wants a way to avoid it. If he is going to benefit the rich by this kind of amendment let him have the moral courage to also direct the money into the economy because the money is there.

How many times do we hear the argument of keeping interest rates high to attract off-shore investment, or we do not have enough indigenous capital of our own? What a falsehood that is, when you examine the fact that the RRSP funds that this bill will allow the rich to benefit

even more from are there and could be used, if this government had the will and the wit to do it.

• (1730)

I know that I am speaking to an entranced Chamber and that I have the attention of all the members in the House of Commons. Every one of the cabinet ministers is listening intently and closely to my suggestion about the use of indigenous capital.

Do you think, Mr. Speaker, that the government would say to those people who are allowed to store vast sums of money in protected and sheltered pension funds that it can guarantee 5 per cent, plus half their capital invested when they draw out the plan, if they put the money into municipal bonds? Is there anyone in this chamber who finds ideologically that the use of indigenous capital somehow is a betrayal of Conservative positions, Liberal positions or New Democratic party positions? No one. I will ask any member to say nay to the idea of using indigenous capital at a low cost bonding level, as is done in the United States, to start paying for long-term debt investment on roads, sewers and sidewalks. We can do it as the Americans do it at 5 per cent bonding. Is there anyone over there against it?

**Ms. Mitchell:** Is there anybody over there?

**Mr. Barrett:** Is there anybody over there? There are a few there and for those few I have this message: let me point out that this is a great potential vote-getter. This is an idea that transcends all political parties. This is an opportunity for the government to provide indigenous capital at low cost to those municipalities that wish to build homes for the homeless and subsidize low cost mortgage rates. I am not talking about massive public housing that has been socially destructive. I am talking about individual choices for ordinary citizens, particularly single parents who are struggling to meet high rental costs in urban areas right across the country.

Where will the money come from? I repeat, \$71 billion exists as of 1986 in RRSPs and half of it is undirected. That half, \$35 billion, goes into the private banks. The banks are using that vast pool of wealthy taxpayers' savings for private investment of their own.

The more I repeat this idea, the more converts I get. What will happen sooner or later is that they will start attacking me, but not the idea. I recall that this same