

Borrowing Authority Act

Mr. Gauthier: I have a question, Mr. Speaker. Since the Budget was adopted on division, there remain 41—

An Hon. Member: No!

Mr. Gauthier: There remain 41 ways and means motions on how to implement the budgetary measures. I should like to ask the Hon. Member whether he has had the opportunity to examine and study these ways and means motions and whether he could comment on the first bill resulting from these Government initiatives, Bill C-99, seeking \$22.6 billion in borrowing authority.

[English]

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, I did not come prepared to discuss the ways and means motion or the borrowing authority, but certainly the borrowing authority has to be linked to the economic program of the Government. I have to say again that my concern is about the general tone, the general attitude, the general intent of that economic program. If you borrow, you borrow to refurbish your coffers, and spend more on the programs that you have in mind. What I am saying is that the general direction is wrong, whether we are talking about spending, the regular Estimates or borrowing. The direction is to allow the free enterprise system to work its will, wherever it will, however it will. I am saying that when you do that, you discriminate against areas of the country which have a weaker private economy. That is what is wrong. The Government should look to its regional development policy and support programs to make sure it is not harming indefinitely the economy of an area which is already very fragile. I say quite seriously to the Government that I am very concerned that the economy of an area that is already weak is going to be further weakened by the general economic thrust.

If you simply allow the market-place to work, it will do so, and there will be more people from our area moving to Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. They are there now, and many of them are happy to be there. Many of them are good solid citizens. I hope that more go there, but I want them to go because they have a choice, not because they have to. Many from Cape Breton will leave too. I am afraid the only alternative left, if you do not have the ways and means to provide economic initiative in that region, is mobility. I do not want to see more people "going down the road". There was a very good film about Cape Breton, about Nova Scotia, called *Going Down the Road*. It says it all, Mr. Speaker. It points to the tragedy of young people who have no option.

What I am saying is that the economic policy of this Government has to take that into consideration. Young people may leave home, and I hope many of them will, but they should not leave because they have to. They should leave because they want to. There should be a way whereby they can live where they were born, where they want to live, and have a decent life for themselves. I am saying that the economic policy has got to change if that is going to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso (Mr. O'Neil).

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to C-99, an Act to provide borrowing authority. This year's borrowing needs will be \$22.6 billion, and this represents a 25 per cent reduction in the borrowing needs of the Government of Canada. This Government is spending smarter, using its resources more effectively and more efficiently.

I would like to follow up on some of the comments made by the Hon. Member from Newfoundland about the history of going down the road that was experienced by Atlantic Canadians, Newfoundlanders, people from eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. That movie was made when the previous Government was in power and at a time when Atlantic Canadians had no options. In 1984 they exercised their options to elect a new Government. Since that time they have achieved new economic options as well.

The Budget of May, 1985, put in place a series of incentives for the Cape Breton region of Nova Scotia which clearly identify and highlight our Government's commitment to regional development and to Atlantic Canada. Cape Breton was the object of some of the most flagrant spending abuses in history. Money was poured into this region of Canada with very little attention paid to long-term economic benefits.

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When our Government came into power in 1984, we inherited a very high rate of unemployment and accepted the responsibility to address that problem not only in Cape Breton but throughout Atlantic Canada and the entire country. Canadians have benefited from the creation of 580,000 jobs since this Government came to power. That is more jobs in 18 months than the previous Government was able to create in its final full term in office.

The new options to Canadians, particularly Atlantic Canadians, are conclusive. Our efforts to apply fiscal responsibility in the management of this country will benefit Atlantic Canadians because they realize that as the pressure on public expenditure increases there is less money for programs aimed at regional development, less money for sound social programs and less money for new programs. Furthermore, our ability as a Government to continue financing existing programs is stretched.

Atlantic Canadians know very well that the interest on loans increased from \$1.7 billion 15 years ago to \$22 billion in 1984-85. That is the interest that taxpayers in this country are paying on the deficit with which every Canadian has been saddled. Everyone has heard the Opposition cry about the state of the dollar. We have heard comments that some people in this country cannot spend as long a time in Florida this year because of the changing value of the dollar. Being able to visit Florida is still very much a luxury in Atlantic Canada, to the disappointment of many of my constituents, but we are still affected by the deficit, the falling dollar and high interest rates. For example, we know that high interest rates represent the single greatest obstacle to new economic opportunities in