

Borrowing Authority

acting now in terms of lost output, lost wages and lost taxes on earned income would be even greater. If the federal Government still refuses to act, it should step aside and let someone else do the job. That is a message, Sir, which I think the Atlantic Provinces will doubtless send to Ottawa in the next federal election.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I enter this debate this afternoon, albeit for only ten minutes, on Bill C-151, an act respecting borrowing authority. In this Bill the Government is asking for a total of \$14.7 billion. It used to be that we would talk around here in terms of "well, what's a million?" Today the buzz words are "what's a billion?" We all know that the cost of running a government and the country has increased substantially, but we on this side of the House constantly wonder whether or not those funds are being wisely spent.

This afternoon I would like to address very briefly one aspect of Government expenditure, that of national defence, and more specifically, the defence of our most northern reaches, the high Arctic. The reason I have chosen to zero in on this specific aspect of Government spending and the woefully inadequate aspect of Government expenditures for our defence in the far North is that I recently returned from a 13,000 kilometre trip in the High Arctic along with other Members of this House and European deputies and Members of Parliament who are members also of the North Atlantic Assembly. I was absolutely shocked to learn of the woefully inadequate defences that our country actually has in the far North when one considers the Soviet Union encompasses the whole eastern and far northern part of the High Arctic. I am not going to give a brief sabre rattling speech, but I just want to give you a few facts and statistics. Believe me, our European friends were more shocked than we were when we discovered some of the following figures and facts.

To begin with, the Government is at present engaged in negotiating the purchase of several hundred F-18A jet fighters. I do not know why this country is involved in the purchase of jet fighters. We no longer have a *raison d'être*, as it were, to be in that phase of defence or offence should a war occur, except in a very limited capacity in Europe within the NATO umbrella. But in North America we are dealing with ICBMs, and the Russians would have to have rocks in their heads to send manned bombers over the Arctic ice cap to bomb North America. I notice some of my Liberal friends are getting a little excited over there. They are still thinking in terms of the 1950s. Those jet fighters are going to cost us at least \$5.5 billion. They will be totally useless for Arctic patrol. They cannot go any distance at all, whether it is in the High Arctic or in Europe. In the High Arctic there is no place for them to land. There are only three airfields in the entire far North, and I am speaking of well above the 60th parallel. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is \$5.5 billion for a useless jet plane which cannot be used to defend our own country. I am not talking about NATO or the European theatre.

What have the Soviets got? They have six divisions, 400 warships and 600 aeroplanes, mainly for reconnaissance and surveillance. Against that, Mr. Speaker, we have a junior

ranking general at the brigadier level. We have the grand total of 75 people attached to National Defence in the High Arctic, of whom 42 are civilians. The rest are professional soldiers. In addition to that, we have several hundred Inuit and Indian scouts on a part-time basis. They perform a very valuable service in search and rescue, but really, as a fighting unit, with all due respect, they cannot be considered professional soldiers. Our Air Force in the far North consists of two planes, both of them Twin Otters, one of them seconded from the RCMP. Again, facing us across the polar ice cap: six Soviet divisions, 400 warships and 600 fighter airplanes.

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The other aspect of our woefully undefended High Arctic is, of course, our relations with the United States. No one is anticipating an invasion from United States, granted. However, from an economic point of view and from the point of view of maintaining our sovereignty, it was not until 1969 that we even attempted to prove to the United States that we in fact controlled our High Arctic up to and including the North Pole and the polar ice cap. It is so bad, we learned from our military advisers in Yellowknife, that the Americans send their nuclear powered submarines through our territorial waters, under the polar ice cap, and when they return to the U.S. bases, only then do we give them permission for the journey that they have already made. This means that the Americans do not respect the longitudinal line that geographically divides the Yukon from Alaska as it is extended to the polar ice cap.

The reason the Americans refuse to accept this line and de facto, in effect, refuse to accept our sovereignty over the high North or the High Arctic is that the Prudhoe oil well basin comes down in a southeasterly direction and it does not extend in a northwesterly direction. The Americans know that much of that oil may very well fall under Canadian jurisdiction. So, for the time being, militarily, as a first step, the Americans are refusing to recognize the extension of the Yukon-Alaska border to the North Pole. Economically, that will of course be extremely important to Canada if and when we strike oil in the Beaufort Sea.

The Government is requesting \$14.7 billion more, to borrow most of its money on the open market, I presume, and is proposing to spend at least \$5.5 billion on the F-18A jet-fighter, which is of virtually no tactical use in North America in view of the fact that the Americans already have a massive interceptory jet-fighter presence in the United States, and in view of the fact that if the Soviets should attack Canada and the continental United States, it will not be from manned bombers of 1955 vintage but, rather, with ICBMs.

I really question the wisdom of borrowing \$5.5 billion. Indeed, by the time we receive delivery of these planes, the capabilities and, in fact, safety of which are extremely questionable at the present time, the figure might well reach \$7 billion or \$8 billion, which would be half the \$14.7 billion which Bill C-151 is asking the House to give the Government authority to borrow. In the next three or four years, half of that amount could conceivably go toward a jet-fighter which