

drug problems and social problems are related to the economy—and I am very close to some of these problems in my constituency and elsewhere—it is mostly people who are the victims of economic circumstances who are alcoholics and drug addicts? Does the Hon. Member realize that she is offending these people? The facts show that problems of alcoholism and drug addiction have absolutely nothing to do with the economic state in one area. Quite the contrary, sometimes these problems exist where the economy is—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member is making an argument. The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald).

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau) does not seem to know what is going on in this country, and he does not seem to know the tragedy unemployment is bringing to hundreds of thousands of people across this country, and he does not seem to know how closely it is related. I tell him to speak to the social agencies and visit them. If he does not have time to do that, he should get out of this House and go and discover for himself—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, yet again I must rise to speak on this Bill, and this time I want to direct my words to Members opposite, or at least to those who are not at the same time members of the Cabinet, such as it is. Would it be presumptuous of me to remind them that they were elected not to represent the interests of the present Cabinet but those of their constituents and the Canadian people?

Would I be going too far back to basics if I were to observe that our country is not a representative democracy but a responsible democracy, and that as such it demands of its Members of Parliament not a blind vote but, rather, the full value of mind and conscience, for the exercise of which they will be judged at the next electoral opportunity?

● (1740)

We have before us a demand for an endorsed cheque. It is a demand for an endorsed cheque in the amount of \$19 billion. For what purpose is it and what is the money to be spent on? These are not unreasonable questions for a prospective investor to ask, for that is what we are, including all Members on both sides of the House. Parliament is being asked to invest \$19 billion of someone else's money and they are the people of our constituencies all across the country.

The Cabinet either cannot or will not tell us what its proposal is. The Cabinet, quite rightly, insists that any corporate borrower must issue a prospectus before it may do its borrowing. It and its provincial counterparts even insist upon a very rigid standard of disclosure for that prospectus. Yet the Cabinet has placed before us Parliamentarians, who have been charged with the ultimate responsibility for the protection of the public purse since the time of King Charles I, a demand for the provision of money with no questions asked.

Borrowing Authority

I am not speaking now as a Progressive Conservative or a Member of the Loyal Opposition; I am speaking as a Member of Parliament. I am speaking as one whose final responsibility is not to a given political Party or even ultimately to a given institution, but to the political system as a whole. In that capacity I am not only saying that this is a bad Bill and that it is one that is inherently dangerous in principle, I am saying that while all of us here realize that, many of us are trying to avoid facing it.

I would ask Members to bear with me since I will have to be somewhat partisan to back up the point I am about to make. Between the years 1968-69 and 1982-83, federal Government spending, calculated on a national accounts basis, rose by 62 per cent. During that same period, costs in the private sector, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, rose by 192 per cent. That is to say that during this period, federal Government spending rose three and one-quarter times the rate that the cost of living went up, despite the fact that this was the most inflationary period that most of us have ever known.

Since the Cabinet re-established itself in February of 1980, federal Government spending has risen by 68 per cent while the CPI has risen by 37 per cent and the GNP by 33 per cent.

In 1968, ours was a proud and stable country. In the period since that time, while the private sector and private citizenry alike struggled to maintain and recover that pride and stability and finally to find a base from which it might eventually be recovered, the Cabinet has been hellbent on a midnight ride of its own choosing, dragging us and the country helplessly behind it.

Canadians have always been so trusting that we have never seriously questioned this. I suppose that does not apply in this place because those people in the Cabinet were of us and were members of our group. This has not been challenged by others in the country, except perhaps by some members of what we probably thought was some extreme fringe. But we as Members were here to take care of that sort of thing for them.

We are now faced with a ruined economy for which the Government assures us it is not to blame. While the Government blames someone else, that responsibility varies from time to time depending on political considerations. While our traditions and parliamentary principles are in tatters, we are faced with a Government Bill which is demanding \$19 billion for the Government's private and undisclosed purposes.

According to 1982 figures, federal Government borrowing already accounts for 51 per cent of all net new security issues placed in Canada. In layman's terms, that means that less than half the money that should be available for private sector expansion and job creation is left after the Government, following the policies of the Cabinet, has had its way. Of course, the Government has had its way because money has been no object to it since it is ours and not theirs. If the Government or a private sector borrower wished to borrow money, the Government would simply raise the price since the taxpayer apparently can afford anything.