

Borrowing Authority Act

their will because Canada is in a delicate situation. It is the responsibility of the gentlemen who sit on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, we are not eager to make ourselves accomplices of such an economic failure. I am one of those who will prove that our budget was a factual budget and, incidentally, all that the Minister of Finance has come up with until now were propositions which were made by us. To date, he has not brought up anything new, just his old habit of getting Canada into debt. He wants us to increase Canada's debt by \$12 billion. We think that enough is enough and we will not be accomplices or refuse to march to the tune of such incompetent people, Mr. Speaker. This is really true, Mr. Speaker. I would be so embarrassed to be on the other side of the House and to ask for a credit of something like \$12 billion whereas those people asked us to reduce the budget deficit only four months ago. We were asked questions, and the then minister of finance, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) demanded proposals to reduce the budget deficit because Canada could not afford it, and because Canadians could not go on paying for debt servicing through their taxes.

It is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, and Canadians should know that there are people in this House who were on this side hardly four months ago and who blamed us, who requested an oil price, who urged us to cut down our expenditures, and today, most of them are very silent and let the Minister of Finance—and I understand them, it is embarrassing. How can they justify an increase in government spending, an increase in government deficit, when the evidence of this economic failure is most obvious. That is the type of government we have. It is important for Canadians to know why we cannot support this measure.

● (1620)

When we talk about contingencies, Mr. Speaker, just for your information, to show you how our affairs are managed by this government, to demonstrate how this government has been not only irresponsible but incompetent, I shall tell you—

An hon. Member: It will be the third time you have said it.

Mr. La Salle: I shall never overemphasize the fact that this government is incompetent and some Canadians are going to believe it. Indeed, a great many Canadians did believe it. Recently, I had a look at what the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) endorsed as supplementary estimates. For the Lachine canal in Montreal for instance they had figured \$50 million. I was only going to ask the President of the Treasury Board if they had decided to build a second canal since the additional funds total a mere \$45 million, 90 per cent over the initial cost, only peanuts.

I take the example of Trois-Rivières where the initial cost of a small contract of \$15 million has been increased by 65 per cent. The President of the Treasury Board authorizes those expenditures with a stroke of the pen. It amounts to \$639

million. I do not have time to list them all as there are 400 such projects. This goes to show you, Mr. Speaker, what type of administration Canadians have chosen for themselves. It is important to emphasize it. It is important because the people opposite will not tell it. So, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that my co-operation will not be forthcoming in this debate.

Before I resume my seat I should like also to remind you that in our proposals we had something for poor owners. It was a compensatory measure well thought out and well prepared, in the spirit of that just society that the Prime Minister has long since forgotten. We were going to help the construction industry and today I heard, and I think that the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Cousineau) is here, that 120 workers in his riding are losing their jobs because of problems in the construction industry. The assistance we wanted to provide for home owners in view of interest costs was a highly useful and positive measure. However, this was defeated because, as I remember quite well, when we introduced the bill, we were told that we had forgotten about tenants. What has the government introduced for tenants in the last four months?

The Minister of Finance refuses to present a budget, supposedly because he does not know the price of oil. At least, we had an agreement in principle on oil. We had an agreement in principle, but the present government certainly does not have one. In any case, Canadians will pay more for their gas, they will go deeper in debt, and they will see part of their taxes used for the service of a debt which has become excessive. This is the type of administration that we now have, and we are asked for a blank cheque, for a borrowing authority of \$12 billion for a government which is unable to present at the same time a paper which would provide explanations and information on how these \$12 billion will be used. Mr. Speaker, this is asking too much. I believe we have no right to accept this blank cheque that the Minister of Finance demands because we have proof of his lack of knowledge in view of the reluctance he has shown in this House about presenting a budget which could stimulate the Canadian economy. I have said that we gave a new direction to the Canadian economy by the service and the role that we wanted to provide for the private sector, and we would have obtained rather extraordinary results.

For political and partisan reasons, this government decided to defeat a government which wanted to implement measures to correct the situation, and Canadians are now disappointed, as we shall see in the months and the years to come. We shall continue to urge the government to present budgets within reasonable time limits and to introduce measures to correct the situation, and I believe that the House will agree that it is urgently required, but for this we need much less irresponsibility or fewer irresponsible people than we now have, and I hope that Canadians will realize what is happening and allow us to put this country on the way back to prosperity and prevent the