

[Translation]

**BORROWING AUTHORITY ACT, 1979-80**

SUPPLEMENTARY BORROWING AUTHORITY FOR 1979-80

The House resumed, from Tuesday, October 23, 1979, consideration of the motion of Mr. Crosbie that Bill C-10, to provide supplementary borrowing authority for the fiscal year 1979-80, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

**Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, when I noted that it was ten o'clock on Tuesday, October 23, I was saying that one of the main reasons why I wanted to speak about Bill C-10 was that even though this bill looked quite simple since it only authorizes the government to borrow some money, it was still quite important as it mentions confidence in the economic and fiscal policy of the government.

And when there is reference to that, Mr. Speaker, attitudes should be mentioned, and our position in the official opposition, the position of other members, is that of defending oneself against the attitude of ministers.

Mr. Speaker, I was saying that one of the reasons why I am taking part in this debate is indeed the attitude of the Minister of Finance on October 23, when early in the day he answered a very simple and polite question put by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) pursuant to standing orders. The Minister of Finance today tried to give explanations, and I recognize his humility. If he wants to remain as humble, he might very well have less difficulty in the future having such simple bills go through.

On this subject, I would like to say we would like to help his House leader and the Prime Minister, who indicated they wanted reform in the House of Commons, not only in our structures but in the attitude of the government in the House. It is for this reason among others that I am acting today to teach a small lesson to the Minister of Finance. He tried to explain this away by stating he never refused to get involved with the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

[English]

It is very nice for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) to find his humility all of a sudden and become a humble member of this House by saying that he never refused an invitation from the finance committee to attend its sitting. That is not the issue. First of all, the issue is the attitude of the Minister of Finance with regard to members on this side of the House and with regard to the finance committee. His attitude in sending to the committee his parliamentary secretary, who is a new member of this House—one cannot blame him because he does not understand the traditions of this House and the sensitivities of hon. members—I cannot understand. He sent his parliamentary secretary to a finance committee meeting last Tuesday evening, Mr. Speaker.

*Borrowing Authority*

**Mr. Kempling:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are discussing a borrowing bill, are we not? What do the remarks made by the hon. member have to do with the borrowing bill?

**Mr. Breau:** You will find out.

**Mr. Kempling:** Let us get on with the business.

**Mr. Breau:** Do I have the floor, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. Breau:** Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the intervention made by the official government whip because I do not believe it is relevant enough for me to spend much time on it.

A new member of this House is parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance. What I am saying is relevant because we are talking about the attitude and behaviour of the Minister of Finance and we are now discussing a bill brought forward by him. Therefore, the House of Commons and Parliament is being asked to approve the policies of the Minister of Finance and decide whether or not we give him the authority to borrow \$7 billion. In my opinion, it is crucial that we examine and criticize the attitude of the minister.

What does the minister do? The steering committee had decided—and please note that the Conservative party had a majority in the steering committee—to invite the Minister of Finance to attend the committee meeting. The hon. member for York East (Mr. Ritchie) had this to say at the meeting of the committee on Tuesday evening:

Mr. Chairman, some indication of what we are going to be debating has already been given, although earlier today I did not know that would likely be the case.

“Earlier today” meant when the steering committee met and drafted a report. At this time the committee was considering the report of the subcommittee. The hon. member went on to say:

As you all know, at the time that this report was being prepared by the steering committee one of the prime actors—

And the prime actor had to be the Minister of Finance. The hon. member went on to say:

—to which it referred was unaware of what it was going to say, and he had some opinions on it which he has since indicated. I would like to give some of the reasons for those opinions if I might.

The parliamentary secretary went on to explain to the committee that, because the Minister of Finance did not wish to come before the committee, he was going to change his mind. After the steering committee had made a report the Committee went on to force a vote and voted against its own subcommittee report. That is what the Conservative party did last Tuesday evening.

The finance minister called him his representative; he said his parliamentary secretary had changed his mind. I am not concerned about the substance because I thought the Minister of Finance's substantive reason for not going before the committee, while I disagree with it, was reasonably good. But why did the Minister of Finance not have the courage to let the