

*Routine Proceedings*

My colleague, the Minister of Finance, intends to table a borrowing authority bill for 1993-94 when the House resumes sitting.

Madam Speaker, I thank you and this House for your attention.

**Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst):** Madam Speaker, Canadians must have been surprised when the President of the Treasury Board made his presentation this morning, without so much as a single reference to the fact that we need to know how the operations of the Government of Canada will be managed on the revenue side. We have not had a budget since February 1992, and we have now been told that it will be the end of April or some time in May before we know exactly how the government intends to budget for its operations during the coming year.

[English]

I wonder how Canadians can be reassured, as the minister suggested they should be, by the approach the government is taking.

The government likes to pride itself on being a good manager. It has talked about responsibility and coming clean with the Canadian people. How many chief executive officers of companies could come before their shareholders and say: "We are going to spend \$160 billion, but we are not going to tell you how we are going to budget for that. We are going to show you our expenditure plan but we are not going to deal with the revenue side of the equation".

This entire document is based on the economic and fiscal statement that was delivered in the House by the Minister of Finance in December of last year. This is a document that generally speaking was not very favourably received by Canadians faced with a long recession, the longest we have experienced in this country in terms of depth and duration since the 1930s.

• (1115 )

It is going to be a tremendous problem for Canadians from all walks of life to try to plan their year's activities. We will now have a situation where Canadians will have to decide whether the economic policy is the economic

policy of the minister of defence, the economic policy of the minister of external trade or the financial policy and the tax policy of the Minister of Communications. As the *Titanic* seeks a new captain, there is going to be a lot of shuffling of the deck chairs as we go through the next three months as the Conservative Party tries to get a grip on where it is going.

The unusual circumstance we are faced with is a government that is going to ask Canadians to take them on faith as it is going to spend \$60 billion. Today, the government is able to come to the House with documents from the minister of external trade. There are 4,300 pages I am told in the documents that the minister tabled dealing with the North American free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The President of the Treasury Board came before the House with some 90 documents such as this dealing with estimates and yet, with all the apparatus of government available to it, both in finance and in national revenue, this government has not seen fit to bring a budget before the people of Canada in the fifth year of its mandate. As it struggles along toward the end of its constitutional capacity to govern this country, it is not prepared to come to the Canadian people, not with statements, but with a full-fledged budget.

I always like to attempt to give credit where credit is due. Over the years the precedent was set that this government brought in a budget at an appropriate time, usually from mid to the end of February. It brought in estimates subsequent to the presentation of the budget so that Canadians as well as parliamentarians could deal in a substantive way with what the government had planned for at least the coming year.

It may be politically expedient because of the change in the leadership of the government to delay a budget, but it is not very satisfactory for Canadians to have to struggle along based on a budget that was put together at least two years ago, at least the beginnings of it were, a budget that was based on projections, conclusions and assumptions that in many respects now are quite a way off base.