

Borrowing Authority

this borrowing Bill for \$19 billion is completely without precedent for unknown expenditures in programs still not defined. Sadly, however, there is more than economic bankruptcy in the Government's spending plans, and if this were private industry we would be bankrupt. We never could get the loan from a bank unless we could project what the revenues were and what we were going to do with the money. There is not only economic bankruptcy here, there is a moral bankruptcy in the conduct of this Government. I say sadly, Mr. Speaker, that when a man of principle perverts principle to protect his person, he flies in the face of biblical admonition and is as blind as the emperor who had no clothes. The mightier the man, the more profound the insult. When men of personal honour are blind to public wrong, that does not remove the mote of morality which must govern public affairs. It just again shows that our temporal leaders have feet of clay and do harm to the system if they stay. Who cares if the Minister can balance the books if he cannot be believed? Public trust and the parliamentary system are more important than any one person, and it is indeed sad to see the perverted defence of one diminish the other. A resignation does not confirm the self-inflicted insinuation of personal wrongdoing, but it does admit a public duty higher than self. Why else do we have guidelines?

Ego and purity of spirit can be no substitute for a sense of public responsibility in our form of democratic Government. Lord Carrington did not fire a shot, Sharon did not personally open the gates of the refugees, but both had a public duty to be responsible for their ministerial acts or omissions. And it should be so here. There is no smear about a conflict of interest, no innuendo about wrong, but a very definite statement that through ignorance, inadvertence, or by design, the Government's own conflict of interest guidelines were broken.

If the guidelines have any meaning at all, and the Government has any credibility, something has to give. By the very nature of conflict of interest guidelines and maintaining public trust in Government, there is not only damage done, but there is an insult to that public trust if nothing happens. If a Government is going to ignore its own guidelines and thus has no credibility with its own defined standard of morality, how can the public believe it on more mundane matters of Government like tax policy, budgets and job creation? That is why the Gillespie matter is so acute. It strikes at the very foundation of Government and no number of billions, borrowed or otherwise, will change that fact.

To restore confidence to the parliamentary system, which is far more important than transitory parliamentary kudos in debate, the Minister has to resign, thereby admitting the public wrong and removing the present private doubt about the Minister's integrity and character. Ironically, and for some sadly, it has been the Government's reaction to the issue which has created doubts in the minds of many where before no doubt existed. The Opposition did not create the "Mickey" connection and only the Government can correct it. A public move may restore personal respect but no move at all creates a

cancer of disbelief which will continue to sicken the system and stigmatize the Minister. If the Government fails to move, even more Canadians will believe that the only pervading guideline of this Government is not what you can do for your country but what your country can do for you.

• (1150)

That sad standard, Mr. Speaker, makes the Minister's resignation imperative and makes the issue even more important than the billions asked for in a blank cheque through Bill C-143.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favour of the amendment to Bill C-143, the borrowing Bill in the amount of \$19 billion.

Ten minutes is a short time to speak. To start, I should like to give a different perspective on how much \$19 billion really is to most Canadians. I have worked it out this way, Mr. Speaker, and this may make things a little more clear. If you, sir, gave your wife \$1 million and told her to spend \$1,000 every day and come back when it was all gone, she would return in approximately three years.

Mr. Blackburn: She would never come back!

Mr. Kilgour: If you gave her \$1 billion and told her to spend \$1,000 a day she would return a good deal older and broke in about 2,740 years. So by my arithmetic, spending \$19 billion at \$1,000 a day would take her 52,060 years.

An Hon. Member: You don't know my wife!

Mr. Kilgour: That represents a lot of shopping and a lot of years to finance part of one year's federal deficit. In that sense, the \$163 billion now in total federal Government debts is an invisible mortgage on our future, on our children and, as someone said, on our grandchildren.

At the moment it is especially important because it vastly reduces the Government's ability to deal with the acute problem of unemployment. As the economist Richard Lipsey pointed out, "you can expect a deficit in a recession and to balance a budget every year is a recipe for disaster." He went on to point out, however, that it is not the existence of the deficit but the fear that the Government has lost control of spending that is the issue. He added that the goal should be to balance the budget over the course of the business cycle, not to balance it every year.

I see that there are seven Liberals present, Mr. Speaker, so through you may I speak to the approximately two million unemployed Canadians about why we have gone so wrong and how we can get things back on track.

The City of Edmonton is supposed to be a mecca of good employment prospects, but I learned last week that 52,000 people are drawing Unemployment Insurance benefits while there are only 1,000 jobs available at the four Manpower offices. I do not know what it is like in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax or Ottawa. I can only shudder when I think of that. Most people think that Edmonton is doing well economically.