

bigger person than that. I can tell you that if this group to my left wants to take a page out of the notebook of their leader, then apparently that is how much influence he has with them. He got up today and accused us of obstructing the business of the House. We are attempting to set Canadians straight and to solve problems of mismanagement, and members of that party raise an issue—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. It was my understanding that the hon. member for Fundy-Royal was addressing himself to the borrowing authority bill.

Mr. Corbett: Indeed I was before I was so rudely interrupted by these “has-beens” on my left.

I tell you there is a solution for Canadians, Mr. Speaker, and it is very, very simple. I doubt that hon. members opposite will hear it because they have not heard anything yet that has not been told to them time and time again. It will be told to them one more time, perhaps, after I finish telling them now.

Quite simply, it is time for Canadians to get this government off their backs and out of their pocketbooks. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that when the citizens of this country next have an opportunity, not only will they turf this bunch of fellows—I was going to say felons but I will say fellows—out of office and their little red turkey friends with them but they will elect a responsible Progressive Conservative government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, in the brief time that is available to me I think it should be very clearly pointed out—and it has to be emphasized time and time again—that the Conservative government in the Thirty-first Parliament was ejected from power by the Canadian people. There is no doubt that the democratic process was fulfilled and ultimately it was the will of the people to get rid of a government whose policies were not acceptable. Unfortunately, the bill before us tonight—

Mr. Corbett: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You so rightly brought me back to the point that we were dealing with the borrowing authority bill. Now, all of a sudden the hon. member is dealing with the previous government. Is it not right and just that he be asked to address his remarks to the bill? He probably does not know anything about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): It is. The hon. member for Comox-Powell River.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, certainly you would allow me the latitude to develop the context in which the present borrowing authority bill is before the House today. The thrust of debate tonight has not been of a constructive nature. The official opposition has torn the proposed legislation to pieces without making a single constructive suggestion. That is unfortunate. If we look at the proposal before us tonight for a \$6.5—

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) is rising on a point of order.

Borrowing Authority Act

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, before the hon. member continues with his remarks I think he ought to read *Hansard* to see what was said earlier in the day. He has not been in the House. Many alternative proposals have been put forward.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, certainly the presentation by the finance critic for the Conservative Party was a timely intervention, particularly as he is a supporter of the high interest rate policy and many of the policies that have brought about the present problems in the Canadian economy. Certainly it was the Conservative government that initiated the high interest rates and high energy prices.

The borrowing authority bill deals with the question of priorities in this country. I would be willing to admit that bad as the government was in the Thirty-first Parliament and bad as was the direction in which they were taking us, the present situation is worse. One of the reasons for that is that there is no sense of direction today.

To pass the bill before us tonight would be like taking money and throwing it into a bottomless hole. That situation will continue as long as we do not have a plan to bail us out of the situation.

There are basically three priorities, and when the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party address those priorities, perhaps a sense of direction will be established. Maybe the borrowing will become constructive and a concrete plan will be formulated. The basic priorities are unemployment, high interest rates and the high inflation rate.

The first priority is unemployment. We got onto the subject of mendacities tonight. The second largest mendacity in this country, other than the ones being put forward on a regular basis about the sanctity of the Conservative Party in the last Parliament, is unemployment. We are dealing with about 1.9 million people unemployed in this country, not 1.2 million and not the seasonally adjusted figure or the labour surplus rate. There are approximately 1.9 million people who do not have access to employment, who do not have an opportunity to share in the wealth of the country to which they are entitled. It is time we heard from the party on the right, the “do nothing but criticize” party and the party that is currently governing the country which is the “do nothing at all” party. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there has to be an employment strategy.

● (2150)

Mr. Cosgrove: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member entertain a question if time permits at the end of his remarks?

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly entertain a question from the minister, but it would be preferable if he could work with his colleague on a short wrap-up because there is a very limited amount of time.

The three priorities are clear: jobs, interest rates and inflation. The question is: what are we going to do about it? There have been many suggestions, and the New Democratic Party