

Borrowing Authority

colleague of mine used to tell when talking about the present state of the country. He said that the way things are going, we need a new emblem for Canada. He thought it should be a cow on the map of Canada. She is feeding in the West, they are milking her in the centre, and you know what she is doing to us in the Atlantic provinces.

I used that to start my question to the Hon. Member because he is interested in more cuts. Does he feel that these should be indiscriminate across the board, that all people in all sections of the country should be treated equally? He takes the same premise for the cuts in UI, for example, as does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). The Minister of Finance said in his statement, as repeated by the Hon. Member today, that there are people in this country who do not want to work, that Canadians are lazy and that they do not want the jobs that are open to them. We were told that there are 167,000 jobs available somewhere in this country. I wish someone would tell me where those jobs are.

● (1720)

I would like to tell the Hon. Member that in the Town of Fort McMurray, which is in the riding of Athabasca, there are 8,000 Newfoundlanders out of a population of 25,000. Those Newfoundlanders are there not because they want to be there. They would probably rather be back home. They are there because they want work. They borrowed money and hitchhiked to Fort McMurray to get a job. They are not on poge but are earning wages. The fundamental assumption that there are people in this country who do not want to work must be challenged.

Does the Hon. Member agree that in addition to the cuts that have already been made, there should be more cuts in unemployment insurance in the Atlantic provinces before the jobs are created? In the Atlantic provinces, there are no job alternatives right now. If the Hon. Member believes that, how does he square it with a policy of regional economic expansion? It still has not been made clear whether or not the Conservative Party is for regional economic expansion. If it is, how does the Hon. Member square his position on UI cuts before jobs are created with a policy of regional economic expansion? If he is not for regional economic expansion, how does he square it with the equalization payments that are now being paid to provinces on the assumption that some provinces in the country are underprivileged?

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I presume I have unlimited time in which to reply to that series of questions that deal with all of the policies of this Government. Briefly, the Hon. Member knows that Canadians want to work and are hard-working people. They are also pretty intelligent people.

Under the present scheme, unemployment insurance benefits are paid at a rate of 60 per cent of former income earned. If, for example, one earned \$10 an hour, then, working a 40-hour week, that makes \$400 gross per week. Subject to tax on both ends, that person's unemployment insurance benefits, at 60 per cent, would be \$240 a week. Therefore, that person would be absolutely crazy to take a job paying less than \$9 an

hour, figuring the tax difference and the cost of going to and from work. There are some things about this scheme which are very anti-employment. What we must do is to put some incentives back into the unemployment insurance scheme. That is where the problem lies.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say two things. First, given the prestigious position of the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn), who is the Chairman of the Finance Committee, I would be quite willing, and I am sure my colleagues on all sides of the House would be quite willing, to extend the question period to allow him to continue to answer the question. I do not want him to feel restricted in any way given the role that he must play in and around the House of Commons. After I have asked my question, perhaps you might, Mr. Speaker, find out whether there is unanimous consent to allow him to continue to answer some questions for a reasonable period of time, for example, another five minutes.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deans: Agreed? Could you ask that question, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent to allow the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) to answer questions for a further five minutes?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry, I hear a "no". The Hon. Member's question must be very succinct or I will have to cut him off.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I think that that is unfortunate. I would like to ask the Hon. Member a question and it is a simple one. When listening to him, I wondered whether in fact he had ever been to Damascus. I would like to ask him now whether he has ever even taken the road. However, it seems to me that he has.

Is the Hon. Member telling the House that he no longer supports the position contained in the motion put by the former Leader of the Official Opposition in which he said:

—that this House holds the opinion that the granting of an authority for the borrowing of a sum greater than the amount which is required to meet the Government's needs to the end of the current fiscal year is objectionable in principle—

Is the Hon. Member suggesting now that he—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). There was not unanimous consent to extend the question period. Therefore, both questions and comments must end now. We have already gone over the 10-minute period allotted. Perhaps at a later date the Hon. Member for Mississauga South will be able to answer the question of the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain. I would now like to recognize the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Cops).