

considerably lower, are now caught, not by any misdemeanour they have committed, but by the terrible insensitivity of the government.

These people all across the country are now paying through the nose, many hundreds of dollars more a month for many families, for their house mortgages, car loans, consumer loans of various kinds, university education loans. They are paying much more than they ought to be paying. If only the government would come up with a fairer and a more sensible interest rate policy or, more to the point, would allow interest rates to fall somewhat.

Of course the government's answer is that it is protecting consumers against themselves. My experience with consumers is that they have more skill and a better track record in protecting themselves well than does the government. Indeed, consumers today would be reasonably well off if they were not saddled with those extra expenditures on mortgages, car loans, and those other expenditures.

Also, when talking about a borrowing bill, one raises the second question that I raised a few moments ago: Are the purposes for which the loan is being made justifiable and reasonable? I am thinking of individual personal consumer borrowing. Once that question is applied to the realm of government, of course, the borrowing is for many, many purposes, but all of which come under the general umbrella of providing hopefully good government for the country.

One must take some particular examples and ask whether the government's expenditure in certain areas is justifiable. I gave a couple of frivolous examples just now to show it was not, but I would like to come to the other side of the question: Is the government, in its stated objective of bringing down the deficit, not cutting in the wrong places, and how can it justify that kind of cut in the light of its request to the House today for another \$25.5 billion in borrowing? I think particularly of two examples, and there are many I could give.

Student aid in the country is in an absolutely terrible mess. It is in that kind of a mess because of the frustration which parents and students feel at the gov-

### *Government Orders*

ernment for not having upgraded the criteria. These rules determine the amount of living allowance students can claim and the amount that parents are expected to contribute and they have not been changed since 1984. Not since the government took over has it changed the levels, despite the fact we have had some inflation and some increase in the cost of living over those six years. It is common knowledge that in 1990 one cannot buy a commodity for the same price it was six years before. Those people who are trying to get an education with very meagre means, in all parts of the country, are not able to access student aid.

What is student aid? Is it a government hand-out? No. It is a program drawn up by the former Liberal administration and, to its credit, continued by this administration—although a little more stingily, as I have said. It is a program that allows young men and women, who otherwise would not be able to go to university, to access some funding. It is not a government grant. We all know that. It is a loan advanced by the state to those individuals who are required contractually—they signed a contract—to pay back every cent of it with interest.

We are not advocating that there ought to be a Santa Claus approach, that all university education for all people who want it should be given out at no cost to them. Student aid, in effect, just defers the cost to them. It allows them to go to university while they are 17, 18 or 20 years of age and then, when they have some economic power and are employed, they can then pay back those amounts. That seems to me to be a very sensible approach.

That program, as good as it is, is being seriously undermined by the penny-wise, pound-foolish approach of the government. In nickeling and diming away at the deficit, the government sacrifices the university educations of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast.

I was in St. John's a few weeks ago and I attended that massive demonstration of students in post-secondary institutions in St. John's. Students who attend Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Cabot Institute and the Marine Institute came together, several thousand of them, to vent their feelings and to send a message about