

price. Everybody protects himself, so when the government tries to play these games, all it does is adds to inflation and again burdens the future generation.

The government must be open and honest about the spending process, and it must do that soon. I would have government members re-read the Auditor General's report of 1976, and re-read the 1974 annual review of the C.D. Howe Institute. They should re-read the final report of the Lambert commission on financial management and accountability and, for goodness' sake, start applying these recommendations soon. It is not enough to stand up here year after year after year saying we are in a period of restraint and the government is bringing government spending under control.

So help me, since I have been here, and certainly for the last five years, every single minister of finance and president of the Treasury Board has said the same thing: "We are bringing government spending under control, and we are going to reduce the deficit." Every single one of them has made that statement, yet the deficit keeps growing and growing, the burden on the Canadian public keeps growing and growing, inflation keeps growing and growing and unemployment keeps growing and growing. We are on a crazy treadmill that is leading to disaster. We are like Massey-Ferguson, fundamentally sound and fundamentally well managed, but in debt beyond our means to repay and no way to get out of it. Unlike Massey-Ferguson and Chrysler, we do not have a big brother to go to for help. I suppose we will not be here and it will be the next generation that pays, so what the heck? In the meantime the government will have received its pats on the back.

To this day John Turner and Donald Macdonald are said to be great fiscal conservatives because they made all those speeches about how they were controlling expenditures. I heard their speeches, as did everybody else. Those two are great fiscal conservatives; that is their reputation. Yet, if you look at the history of what happened when they were here, you will see that that is when the system really went to pot. These great fiscal conservatives were the ones who are now making life so miserable for the current Minister of Finance, who I think is a sincere and honest man and would like to do a good job in the portfolio he is now managing. He is finding it darned difficult because of the job done by those who preceded him.

Difficult or not, I hope the Minister of Finance has the backbone to make tough decisions without letting ambition get in his way in terms of future higher offices he might have in mind. I hope he will make the tough decision of bringing spending under control so that a year from now we are not back here again debating borrowing authority because the government needs a "mere" \$17 billion to sustain itself and pay for those wonderful, marvellous programs the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) has thought up such as LEAP, LAP and so on.

I close with that plea. I do not mean to cast aspersions on the integrity of the Minister of State for Finance or the Minister of Finance, but I for one have listened to speeches identical to his in terms of bringing spending down, reducing

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the deficit and all those things. I have listened to that same speech essentially at least five times over the last five years. The results have been directly the opposite. Quite frankly, I will wait to be shown because I cannot accept at face value the statements being made. I hope I am wrong; I hope they are right, and I hope for once we will have a Minister of Finance who will put political responsibility ahead of political expediency. But I doubt that, considering what he has done in terms of the National Energy Program. In that respect he has certainly put political expediency ahead of what is good for the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I hope we would have had a further intervention on the part of government at this stage. After all, it is the government that is trying to justify the authority to borrow. It is not up to the opposition to prove that it should not be given that authority. This type of bill has been pushed into this position because—and this is supported by my memory and participation in debates over a number of years—the government has decided to be cute. This year's effort is an attempt to tuck it into an income tax bill. I do not know where the mandarins in the Department of Finance got the idea that somehow or another they should be able to slide things past Parliament.

Mr. Evans: It is a question of precedent.

● (1510)

Mr. Lambert: It is not a question of precedent, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Evans) just said. There have been changes in the rules of the House. I remember the borrowing authority and appropriations bills which were debated in the House before 1969, when there was a habit of tucking into a bill and on rare occasions the government would admit to the necessity of increasing its borrowing authority. It is only with the advent of monetary and fiscal mismanagement that we have seen borrowing authorities grow and grow as deficit upon deficit have piled up. It is almost impossible to remember whether the accumulated deficit is \$50 billion or \$60 billion. What will we be looking at in the accumulative spending programs of the government for this year and next as a result of the pressures of inflation and the ever-present government attempt to scramble and scramble?

I remember in 1963 when the new Messiah on the financial horizon, Walter Gordon, came in with a total budget of \$6.3 billion. Since that time we have experienced a continuing escalation of budgetary excesses, notwithstanding the supposed efforts of the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who technically heads the administration of today. In a fiscal sense he does not care a tinker's damn what happens to the economy, so beset is he with chasing the greatest red rabbit—and I am not referring to a red herring—of constitutional change down the trail ahead of the Canadian public. Nero fiddled while Rome burned; in an economic sense the Prime Minister is playing entire symphonies of irrelevant music while the Canadian economy is being destroyed. Frankly, the whole