

Borrowing Authority Act

important that we recognize very clearly our responsibilities as the representatives of the people of our constituencies. I think it is important that we not bicker with one another but speak out constructively regarding our options and proposals to deal with what is clearly the most important economic crisis facing the people of the country, and that is the devastating crisis of unemployment.

It is essential that the Government, when seeking the authority to borrow some \$30 billion, clearly recognize that its most important priority must be putting back to work the almost two million Canadians who want to work and cannot find jobs. We are not only dealing with the literally hundreds of thousands of people who are in their fifties and early sixties and have been laid off from their jobs or fired or, as a result of technological change, found themselves no longer able to continue with the work they have been doing for many, many years. We must deal as well with a whole generation of young people.

In excess of half a million young people are desperately looking for work but find that the doors are closed, that as a result of the bankruptcy of the Government's economic policies they are unable to work. At the same time, because of the catastrophic economic policies of the Government, we find that access to post-secondary education is becoming more and more restricted. Young people are being hit with a double-whammy. On the one hand, they are unable to find work; on the other, they find that the opportunities for continuing education are becoming more and more restricted as a result of cutbacks in post-secondary education funding.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we find that women and the disabled are affected to a very significant extent by cutbacks. Governments, both federal and provincial, have refused to implement mandatory affirmative action plans to ensure that women are not the first victims on the firing line in these rough economic times.

Many of us are also concerned about the fact that at a time when Canadians are bearing a record level of debt on a per capita basis, the Government refuses to make the necessary changes to the federal income tax system, whether to the corporate income tax structure or to the personal income tax structure, to ensure that loopholes are closed and that large corporations are paying their fair share.

We hear much talk from members of the Official Opposition about the size of the deficit. I share the Opposition's concern about the burgeoning deficit but they are silent when it comes to putting an end to the massive network of the so-called corporate tax expenditures. These expenditures amount, in effect, to direct grants to the corporate sector and in 1979 totalled some \$6 billion. We know that the tax system for the banks in this country is effectively a voluntary "pay-as-you-go" system. How on earth can they defend a system in which Revenue Canada puts the boots to ordinary working men and women at the same time as they turn a blind eye to loopholes which permit literally billions of dollars to be retained in corporate coffers instead of being spent on job-creation programs?

● (1130)

There are many ways in which we could move forward to create jobs in this country, such as by significantly enhancing research and development. Our record of R and D is one of the worst in the western economic world.

There is a host of other programs which could be implemented immediately to create jobs, whether it be identifying public works projects in conjunction with local municipalities, work that has to be done now and should be done, such as in the forestry sector which has been disgracefully neglected by both federal and provincial governments. As the Science Council of Canada has noted, there is a serious crisis in the industry and if we are not prepared to take emergency steps toward reforestation and conservation of our forest industry, we may lose it. For a Member of Parliament from British Columbia where forestry is the number one industry, that is obviously a very serious matter.

There must be a fundamental restructuring of our economy to strengthen the manufacturing sector. There is no excuse for the fact that Canadians are the largest per capita importers of agricultural and mining machinery in the world. We are quite capable of making our own mining and agricultural machinery and putting Canadians to work in that way. We should have a Canadian merchant marine and ship Canadian goods on Canadian ships.

It is essential that in dealing with the whole question of technological change we must be its masters and not its servants. Where working people are affected by technological change, they should have the right to negotiate and there should be provision to give them ample notice. It is women who are affected to a disproportionate extent by technological change. We must look at the length of the work week, at early retirement, at part-time work for those who want it and at effective retraining schemes for those affected by technological change.

Over the past six or eight months, I have gone out to the doorsteps of my constituency of Burnaby and listened to the people I represent. In my constituency office in south Burnaby my assistant, Del Carrel, and I have noted a dramatic increase in the level of personal hardship and suffering being experienced in that community. I am sure the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney) and others from British Columbia have experienced the same thing. We see the devastating impact of the Government's economic policies on the people we represent, whether they be pensioners, young people or those thrown out of work.

What alternative does the Official Opposition offer? Occasionally we get a few hints. The Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) has said: "If I told you what I would do we would never get elected". Just a few weeks ago he told us what the Tories would do with respect to the means test for old age pensioners and for family allowances. He is the official finance spokesperson for the Tory Party. He said:

You have to look and see, on the social side, whether it is possible to introduce more means testing so that programs are not universal,—