

*Borrowing Authority Act*

rooms in the house, because more and more the heavy hand of government is strangling initiative, industry, and the efficiency of the economy of this country. The Prime Minister later proclaimed his conversion to a belief in the doctrine of the pre-eminence of the private sector. But I am afraid that this remains uncorroborated by any fruits "meet for repentance" to which the scriptures allude.

The private sector in Canada has been the strength of the nation in the past and will so remain in the future, if given an opportunity to make an effective contribution. We must think of the place of the business community in the economy of Canada in providing opportunities for the great numbers of our people who seek ways of providing for their own needs and the needs of their families. They are prepared to take the necessary time, expend energy, lay the plans and face the obstacles of entering into business opportunities in Canada, because they have the desire to make a contribution and to look after their own needs. Not only must we think of the needs of the people in the business community, but also the provision of job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of fellow Canadians.

Many times when the government enters into restrictive measures as far as business is concerned, it fails to realize the role Canadian business is playing in the economy of the nation. Approximately 60 per cent, or perhaps more, of job opportunities is provided by small and medium-sized businesses. This calls into question any suggestion that we ought to have more government control, direction, and the heavy hand of government being exercised in the business community to a greater extent than at the present time. As well as providing job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of fellow Canadians, those engaged in the small and medium-sized business sector supply a great proportion of the revenue required by the government to assist those in society who cannot provide for themselves for a variety of reasons. They do not object to this. However, they object to the confiscation of their time, energy, and resources by a government which has neither the will nor the capacity to spend its money in an efficient and productive manner.

Also we are faced with the tragedy of unrealized possibilities in this country of ours. The editorial in the *Financial Times* to which I referred pointed out that these government programs and policies and other initiatives have produced four bad years for the economy when Canada could have been enjoying four good ones. This is the tragedy. This country has natural resources, skills, technology, will, and all other prerequisites for progress and success. But because of the absence of effective policies and leadership, its aspirations remain unfulfilled, its potential thwarted, its capacities underutilized and its shaky economy is maintained on borrowed money. It will be a burden on the backs of our children, their children and even succeeding generations, which they will not be able to bear. These are things that we have to remember. We have to recognize that these are the things which are facing us. Unless we can reach the point in our history when government, either this one or one that will be succeeding it, faces some of these

[Mr. Patterson.]

issues, we are going to suffer from a lagging economy, an overburdened public, and the inability of our nation to achieve the objectives that the people of Canada have a right to expect.

• (1532)

I intended to deal with the policies which have been presented by my leader and my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative party, but due to the limited time available it will not be possible. I would commend to hon. members the statements that have been made outlining the policies which we have been proposing in order to meet this challenge of a lagging economy. I would ask that they take the time to peruse these statements and speeches so that they might realize that all our participation in debate is not negative and that we are presenting ideas which we believe are essential if the problems of Canada are to be met, and if we are to have an economy that will respond and be able to meet the challenges of the days ahead.

Another weakness of the government is its addiction to borrowing, and it is underlined once again by the presentation of this bill. I would refer to statements made by the Prime Minister nine or ten years ago in which he talked about Canada being on the road to financial disaster if nothing was done to bring spending under control. We now find down through the years since then that not only has the problem remained unsolved, but it has been aggravated. The very things which the Prime Minister predicted would happen unless something was done then, are actually happening in our economy and society today.

This bill takes the form of a third demand for additional borrowing authority. We all know that there are two main sources of revenue for government, taxes and borrowing. As far as taxation is concerned, it has just about reached the limit, and I do not believe that the general public will stand idly by for additional increases. The problems they are facing now in meeting their own needs, because of the confiscation of their savings and income by the government, even now are not acceptable, and I believe that there will be a revolt in this country if the government proceeds along this line.

We are left therefore with one alternative, and that is borrowing. After two previous authorizations for borrowing, the government is back asking for authorization to borrow \$17 billion, \$7 billion for this fiscal year and another \$10 billion for the coming year. It is unprecedented in our history for a government to ask for borrowing authority two years in advance in order to carry on its operations. We all have heard the statement of the Auditor General that spending is out of control. As a result, there was a comptroller general appointed, but he was not given the power to exercise any control, and the problems remain unsolved, the evil still remains in our midst, and we are faced with a continuation of policies that can only spell disaster for Canada.

I would like to refer hon. members to one or two statements in a book by William E. Simon called "A Time for Truth". Mr. Simon is the former secretary of the treasury of the United States. At page 10 of his book he says: