

Speaking in that debate, the Honourable Michael Wilson explained Mr. Clark's amendment. In doing so, he said, in clear, distinct and admirable prose, the following:

There is a well established principle that Parliament only provides sufficient borrowing authority to a government to allow it to finance its operations within the current fiscal year.

If that principle were to be applied to Bill C-11, the bill now before your committee, not only would Part II be struck out, but even part of Part I of the bill would be out. That is how rigorous the present Minister of Finance was in 1982. That is how rigorous a standard he enunciated in respect of this matter of giving borrowing authority for a subsequent fiscal year.

He also picked up from another member of the other place, the expression "slush fund," an expression which he used to describe borrowing authority that extended beyond the end of the current fiscal year. Why did he pick up that term? He did not originate it. He picked it up because, he contended, it was not known how that money was going to be spent and that it would be irresponsible to provide the government of the day with a "slush fund."

That is not language that I am adopting; indeed, I suspect that, on reflection, the Honourable Michael Wilson, would not adopt it either. But that is the way such a measure struck him at the time. It struck him that the providing of borrowing authority beyond March 31—in other words, authority for a subsequent fiscal year—was simply providing a "slush fund."

And what did the government of the day do when confronted by this statement of high principle? The government of the day responded by agreeing to amend its bill. I do not know how much face was lost; I really do not care. It agreed to amend the bill by dropping the amount that would have been provided by the non-lapsing part of the bill. That was the response of the government of the day!

Honourable senators, we then come down to the one bill which, in my opinion, is sufficiently similar to the one now before us as to be a guiding example, and that is Bill C-143, a bill introduced in Parliament in 1983.

On February 17, 1983, the Honourable Marc Lalonde, then the Minister of Finance, moved the second reading of Bill C-143. That bill, like Bill C-11, contained two parts: \$5 billion for the balance of the then current fiscal year and \$14 billion for the forthcoming fiscal year. Mr. Lalonde stated in his speech on the motion for the second reading of the bill that the main estimates would be tabled in Parliament on February 22, 1983, and that a budget would be presented to Parliament early in the new fiscal year.

On February 22, 1983, the very day the main estimates for 1983-84 were tabled, the Honourable Erik Nielsen stated in the House of Commons that it was absolutely and vitally necessary that Parliament have adequate time to study and debate the budget, as well as the new borrowing bill. On that same day Mr. Wilson reaffirmed his support for what he regarded as parliamentary principle. What he said is to be

found, in part, at page 23086 of the *Debates of the House of Commons* of February 22, 1983. He is referring to a statement by the Minister of Finance and he says:

● (1720)

Last October the Minister said:

And he now quotes the Minister of Finance:

In the budget I intend to present early in 1983, I will review again the fiscal situation for the current fiscal year—

That budget, as honourable senators may remember, was presented April 19, 1983.

Mr. Wilson went on to say:

He has not done that.

He then continues his quotation:

—set out estimates for 1983-84—

We have not seen them.

And then he refers to the matter to which Senator Murray referred, the projection for future fiscal years. He did not refer, as Senator Murray seemed to imply, only to this matter of projections. He wanted also both a relevant budget and the current, main spending estimates. Of course, the main spending estimates were tabled that very day, February 22, 1983.

The Minister of Finance, the Honourable Michael Wilson, stated at that time that, since the relevant budget was not before the house and that since the main estimates had not been seen, he would not be prepared to support the motion that the bill be read a second time. We know what happened; that bill eventually became law on March 30, only at high noon, notwithstanding that Part 1 of that bill provided money for the fiscal year which was then expiring—virtually in its grave—as well as borrowing authority for the forthcoming fiscal year which would start on April 1.

In March 1984 the government brought in a bill to provide borrowing authority for 1984-85. That was after both the main estimates and the budget had been presented. However, there was a provision in the bill that provided for non-lapsing money in the amount of \$4 billion, and of course the official opposition, consistent with the position it had always taken, objected. It attacked that non-lapsing provision. Some honourable senators may remember this, because so strongly opposed was the Progressive Conservative Party to the provision of non-lapsing authority in Part I, indeed to the provision of non-lapsing authority of any kind, that they conducted what I call a "bellabuster" on March 28, 1984. Senator Flynn remembers that. He remembers that that was the night when—

Senator Flynn: What kind of a filibuster are you conducting yourself, now?

Senator Stewart: Thank you for your assistance. He remembers well that that was the evening when the representative of His Excellency, the Governor General was seated at the foot of the Throne, waiting to give Royal Assent to various bills. The "bellabuster" to which I refer made it impossible for that Royal Assent to take place that evening. I know that Senator Flynn remembers that very well.