

Government Orders

other parts of the world. We need to give them a little spark in order to get them going.

That would be much more productive than just saying: "No, we are not going to do anything. We are holding the course. We are not going to create any new special programs".

The irony of ironies is that at the end of the year, by the time we add in the interest, we are talking about a \$35 billion cost.

As we discuss this borrowing bill today it frustrates me to think that we are borrowing \$35 billion. That is what this bill is all about, the government wants borrowing authority for close to \$35 billion. It drives me a little nuts that we are passing a bill to approve \$35 billion for unemployment insurance and welfare payments, from which there is very little return for the taxpayers of Canada.

I would much rather give the authority to the government today for an extra \$2 or \$3 billion to ignite the entrepreneurship of this country and help to figure out a way to get people back to work. Let us take a chance on the entrepreneurship of this country.

There was a delegation from the north here this morning. Everybody is wearing "Save the North" buttons around today. One gentleman who had lunch with us told us that this year they will not be able to plant approximately 42 million trees for commercial purposes because they cannot, they do not have the funds or they do not have a program to plant these 42 million trees.

My small mind cannot understand that. There are a million and a half people unemployed and another two million people on welfare, and the north is crying out for help. If all of a sudden, seven or eight years from now, we have a shortage of lumber in this country it will send the cost of our housing and other related services sky-rocketing. I just cannot understand it.

If ever there was a time to support a community like the north, especially in an area like forestry, this is it. When there are such large numbers of unemployed we should be planting trees in this country until we are blue in the face. That is not to mention all the environmental aspects. This is a nation that prides itself on leading the way in the environmental movement, a nation whose government came out three years ago with its green plan. I cannot believe that the officials in the Department of the Environment cannot figure out a way to combine with their green plan the fact that there is a shortage of manpower to plant 42 million trees and yet

we are paying \$35 billion for people who cannot find work.

We have to get back to basics in this country. We have to start using our creativity again.

• (1530)

If our industrial capacity is going through a rough period because of global markets we will have to shift our focus and emphasis to some other area.

I just cannot understand what is wrong with shifting our energy, our focus, into something like forestry, or toward supporting the north.

It is interesting that the delegation that came here today from Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, and other places in the north told us that they cannot get any attention from the national media for the problems they are having in northern Ontario. They send briefing documents. They send notes. They come to Ottawa and have a good reception, but they cannot get any attention from the national media.

That is a crime. The resources of the north are important not just to our province of Ontario but to every province in this country. For years and years the economies of the north were integral to the standard of life that we enjoy in this country. Our resources in this country have been the cornerstone of our economic plan and have led us into all kinds of new fields in manufacturing and new technologies and everything else.

It is very strange that we cannot give our northern friends, who are in such deep pain right now, the time, the energy, the profile, and the focus to address some of their specific problems.

I was talking to one of my colleagues at lunch today, our Ontario caucus chairman from London, about the difficulty of bringing attention to the north. I said that we should take a page out of the book of the members from Atlantic Canada. Whenever there is a problem in Atlantic Canada there are emergency debates in this House and the best speakers in this House get up and they make sure everybody participates. I applaud the members from Atlantic Canada. Those of us in central Canada must take a page out of their book and start to speak a little more forcefully around here to bring attention to some of the problems in northern Ontario.

I want to repeat that the government is asking for the authority to spend a lot of money here today. If I understand this bill correctly the borrowing authority confirmed by subsection 1 is increased by an amount equal to the lesser of \$3.9 billion. I think it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$25 billion. That is a lot of money.