

Borrowing Authority Act

and they cannot understand. They cannot grasp the significance of this and they cannot understand the feeling of despair that is gripping the country.

Mr. Peterson: We would like to know what your policies are.

Mr. Patterson: Hon. members opposite have heard the policies enunciated by my leader and our economic spokesman.

Mr. Peterson: They said they did not have any alternatives.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Speaker, hon. members opposite have gone beyond any possibility of redemption.

I was going to speak about the disastrous energy policy which the government introduced. The minister backtracked on that because he knew it was a disaster. It was driving investment out of Canada and undermining confidence in the nation, so he had to backtrack. Perhaps the Minister of Finance will also backtrack, although I do not think he will go very far back. He will try to convince the people of Canada that after all, the Government of Canada is doing something.

I come now to the tax burden, Mr. Speaker and in this regard I should like to refer to an article which appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on March 27, 1982. It is headed "‘Hidden’ taxes take huge bite", and starts out as follows:

The average Canadian family with a cash income of \$22,500 paid income taxes of \$3,345 in 1980, but other taxes, ranging from oil and motor vehicle taxes to amusement and property taxes accounted for an astounding 70 per cent of the average family's total tax bill.

The people are asked for more money to help the government finance some more of its disastrous programs when all the time, they are just staggering under the burden of taxation. It promises that we will have equity and programs that will create hope and optimism and job opportunities and that will help the people realize their dreams. With our natural resources, our people, our skills and our technical know-how we are one of the richest nations in the world. We have everything that is required to build a tremendously important and viable and satisfying economy.

The government says we on this side talk about doom and gloom but why should we not, Mr. Speaker? The possibilities for prosperity are there but dreams are being shattered, homes are being lost, businesses are going to the wall, farmers are suffering, and still the government expects people to come along and bail it out, giving it more money to squander.

● (2030)

I believe, Mr. Speaker, as others have said, that there has to be a change in our philosophical approach to the problems we face. The Prime Minister said the market system has failed and co-operative federalism is dead. He predicted a greater involvement of government in the nation's business. The record of the government under this Prime Minister is one of the shattering of enterprise, the penalizing of industry and of the spirit of entrepreneurship, the imposition of regulations and a crushing burden of taxation, and the blatant assumption of

more and more control over the lives of business and individuals.

I would like to close by posing this question again: why should the people authorize this government to borrow another \$6.5 billion? And there will be more. As long as this government is in office we will be faced with a deteriorating situation until this country has lost its hope and vision of the future. The government is insensitive to the needs and aspirations of the people, and incapable of conducting a program which will help in the economic renewal of this nation of ours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House certainly share the hon. member's concern about the present state of our economy. We recognize there are a lot of difficulties facing us and we would appreciate his sharing with us his advice as to what specifically he feels we might be able to do in order to get rid of high interest rates, control inflation and to get the economy rolling?

Mr. Kempling: We have been telling you for years.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Withdraw the budget.

Mr. Peterson: I simply point out that the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) has indicated that he would not deviate from our present high interest rate policies.

Mr. Wilson: Who said that?

Mr. Peterson: I would appreciate any advice and direction he can give us so that we can work constructively to solve these problems.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I was not planning to rise on this point but the hon. member did attribute a comment to me which is totally without foundation, and I want to disassociate myself from it. Never have I said that I supported the interest rate policy of this government. It is totally wrong, it can be changed, we can have lower interest rates, and I pointed out how to do so in my remarks. If the hon. member's ears are not serving him well today, I suggest he read *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Peterson: I certainly retract my remarks if they were not true. I did understand last year that, with U.S. interest rates very high, he felt we had very little alternative but to act in accordance with international realities.

Mr. Wilson: I will take you aside and explain it all to you.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to clarify the issue. I believe it was actually the former finance critic, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) who indicated his support for the high interest rate policy.

Mr. Taylor: Liberal gossip, NDP gossip.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the indication from the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr.