

decided what he is going to do. The Minister of National Health and Welfare is already preparing his proposals. The Minister of State does not talk about it. The Prime Minister, in his former incarnation, said, "I think it is so delicate a matter, I am going to have an all-Party agreement before I even begin to discuss it".

Where is it? Why are we having these musings in public indicating where they are going? I can state why. The suspicion we have is that they are not really concerned about the needy and the poor. If they were so concerned, why would they cut off summer employment for our young people? Why are they changing the unemployment insurance system into a welfare system where you only get it based upon need, not because you have an entitlement to the program? Why do they cancel the industrial training program that was used almost exclusively by women who want to get back into the workforce? the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) is a fraud and a phoney. She says she believes in women's rights, and then she cancels an \$80 million program which helps all kinds of women get back into the workforce.

Mr. McDermid: Our Government is one of consultation.

Mr. Axworthy: The Member who is bellowing says his Government is one of consultation and that the Liberals did not consult. He was a member of a parliamentary committee which we established that spent a full year consulting with Canadians about employment programs. That committee made a report and we implemented most of its findings. That was consultation. That was the kind of initiative we took. That was a parliamentary committee of all parliamentarians. It was not done in secret like the Minister of Finance is doing. We consulted and we got results.

Let's get down to the basis issues. They say they are not really going to change universality only tinker with the tax system. They say they are not going to wield the tax system around. Let me say something about the tax system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I ask all Members to listen to the Hon. Member's speech as they did this morning to the speeches of the Leaders.

Mr. Axworthy: Part of the problem is that they say they are really not to going cut benefits because they are going to use the tax system. What they ignore is that the tax system cannot measure real need in the family situation. There are families in my riding whose income is not the true measurement of their need. It does not recognize that the woman has a child rearing responsibility. Many times they do not receive their fair share of the family income. The family allowance is essential to maintain the basic requirements for those children.

That cannot be measured by family income. You cannot apply an artificial touch. If Members opposite do not know that, they are not in touch with what is going on in their constituency. I suggest they spend the Christmas holiday talking to people rather than engaging in this artificial, insensitive, silly kind of economic accountability, which is simply

Borrowing Authority

designed to help the Minister of State fulfil her obsessive desire for fiscal responsibility.

Let's talk about the needs of women and children in this society. The problems of older people cannot be measured by their incomes because they may have to pay \$400 to \$500 a month for a rental apartment. Tax away their income and they will no longer have a place to live. The tax system cannot be used to measure true needs in society.

If this Government applies the artificial measurement, that accounting principle designed somewhere in the bowels of Toronto Bay Street, to attempt to determine who has needs, it will ignore the reality of our social structure. It will ignore the fact that the basic strength of the universal system is that it recognizes that both children and older people have basic needs that cannot be measured by some quirk or mathematical formula.

That is why it is so essential to maintain and defend the principle of universality. If Members are so interested in consulting, I suggest they listen to their own advisory council on welfare, a group of Canadians drawn from across Canada who also said they see no compelling reason at the present time to change the family allowance program. Those are Canadians talking. Why is the Government changing the program? Why is the Government playing games? We know the real reason. It is not interested in the needy or the poor. The Government simply wants to get back to what the Minister of Finance describes as a rate crisis to reduce the deficit. That is what this is all about. That is why Canadians are worried. The Government will never succeed because we will fight it to the end to stop those changes.

• (1510)

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate today, but I am beginning to wonder why, after listening to the speech of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Sparrow: I stand in support of the statements which were made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) and the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall). As my hon. colleagues have so well stated, the reason the Government must borrow these moneys is to pay the financial obligations that the Government inherited from or which were levied by the previous Government. If that Government had managed the country with responsibility, perhaps we would not be here today asking for this money.

On September 4, Canadians voted for a change and for a better future, because they knew that this Government could do much more to create that future. In doing so, they provided the opportunity to make a fresh start, to build new confidence and to provide a new national sense to achieve the economic promise and potential of Canada.

We are a Government of Canadians, which is for Canadians, and we will continue to be that way.