

Borrowing Authority

total government spending. I want to relate it to the buying of houses. Total government spending is enough to buy a new \$75,000 home for every householder in British Columbia.

Mr. Paproski: If they could find one.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: My colleagues will be interested in knowing that interest on the public debt is enough to buy a new \$75,000 home for every householder in the city of Calgary. I think I will move to Calgary. That is a place where a house costs much more than \$75,000, but at least it would be a down payment.

The annual cost of interest on the public debt next year will equal \$500 per capita and \$1,390 per taxpayer. These are facts with respect to the spending habits of this government as they relate to the individual citizen. It is impossible to talk in terms of billions of dollars because, as I pointed out, it is impossible to comprehend. The fact that a billion seconds ago the first atomic bomb had not yet been exploded, shows how enormous a billion is. We are talking now about 14 times that.

As I mentioned before, one in four tax dollars is used to service the debt. Seven years ago, the burden of paying that interest rate was only one dollar in nine. That is now reduced to one dollar in four. With that progression we will be faced with a very serious proposition two or three years down the road.

I want to give some other examples because I have many of them, and I want hon. members opposite to listen very carefully to these statistics. The government's total debt is the equivalent of \$5,000 per capita and \$13,700 per taxpayer. That is the total debt obligation on every citizen of this country. The cost of interest on the debt exceeds the value of federal income taxes collected from persons earning less than \$30,000 a year.

I have a number of other examples which relate to the average citizen of this country. These relate to the enormity of the spending programs and the deficit which has been occasioned by this government. I would be only too happy to table this information for the benefit of hon. members.

If any member is interested in exactly what the consequences are and wants more examples of what this means to every taxpayer, I would be glad to give this information or to speak to any member personally.

I have just a couple more minutes, and I want to finish by calling attention to what I thought was an excellent address referred to in a recent article by Ronald Anderson of *The Globe and Mail*. The address was given by Professor J. C. Gilson of the department of agricultural economics of the University of Manitoba. Professor Gilson pointed out that we in Canada are headed on a very serious course for the future of our country. In his remarks he demonstrated a serious concern for the future of our country. He pointed out that, unfortunately, under this government we now have a country which is

tormented by dissension and is apparently unable to deal intelligently with economic problems, while other less well-endowed nations seem capable of doing so. He said that an important part of the problem is that in Canada the revolution of rising expectations has turned into a revolution of rising entitlements.

People in Canada, according to Professor Gilson, have somehow come to expect, as a result of this government's spending habits, more and more government spending and more and more government intervention in terms of the day to day activities of life and business. But, Professor Gilson points out, we are now facing leaner times and leaner circumstances and must come to grips with the very serious problem.

Professor Gilson said the following:

Seldom in the history of our nation have Canadians faced as much contention, conflict and confrontation, with so little resolution of their basic economic problems, as they did during 1980.

He said:

The urgent economic issues which . . . are developing into a national crisis, are inflation, the large and increasing federal budgetary deficit, the chronic deficit in the current account balance of payments, and the weak performance in productivity improvement.

I think Professor Gilson really puts his finger on the problem in our country when he points out, and I quote:

It is clear that our society needs to take stock of itself; to make an honest assessment of its goals, values and institutions, and to decide how it is to be reshaped and matched with current realities.

Unless and until the federal government gets its revenue and expenditure policies under control, to the point where effective fiscal policy can be used along with monetary policy to combat inflation our nation will continue to alternate between periods of monetary squeeze and excessively high interest rates, and serious upsurges in the rate of inflation.

Put into very simple terms, the proposition is that with the deficit position this government has inflicted on the people of Canada, there is absolutely no room for flexibility in dealing with the serious problems of the average citizen. Where is the resilience and the strength in our economy that would enable us to deal with oppressive interest rates? Where is the ability to help, as we attempted in our budget to help, the low and middle-income earner? Facing that kind of drain on the economy, what can be done to deal with interest rates? What can be done to help the small businessman or the average citizen in terms of mortgage interest rates on his home or in terms of real property taxation, which is now growing because of the requirements of the municipalities of our country? An ever-increasing cycle is developing as a result of this government's actions?

● (2150)

I want to give a message to the government tonight, a message which is serious and which we must all consider: unless we get together in a constructive way—and that is the basis of all my remarks on second reading of this bill, on the principle of this bill,—unless every member of the House comes forward and tries to give advice to the government and