

in the size of the deficit that year. He suggested that the deficit for the fiscal year 1982-83 would be \$10.6 billion. People shuddered at that figure; it was an incredible figure. Not many months later there was an upward revision, a slight upward revision from \$10.6 billion to \$19.6 billion!

Mr. Anguish: A small miscalculation.

Mr. Riis: It was a sharp shock, a small miscalculation as my hon. colleague says. Then 15 weeks later it was revised upward again to \$23.6 billion.

Mr. Blenkarn: They are raising the deficit like they do the gas prices.

Mr. Riis: We are still not at the end of the year. What will the final figure be? It seems as if the game of roulette is being played—spin the marble and see where it comes up, and it goes up higher every time.

The Government asks us to have faith in its ability to manage the finances of the country and to have a sensible fiscal and monetary policy. It must be dreaming.

I should like to refer to one small point which was made by my hon. colleague to the right. She drew attention to the fact that some months ago the Progressive Conservatives took some credit for the fact that they had encouraged the Government to manage its fiscal responsibilities better, that they had stopped the request for a huge borrowing amount and that they had made a deal so that the Government would have to return and explain once again how it would spend \$4 billion. Mark my words, those fellows across the aisle will not be explaining how they will spend that \$4 billion. They will whistle and waffle and pull figures out of the air. They will try to explain all the jobs they are creating—60,000 out of a need for two million. I ask Progressive Conservative colleagues to my right whether they were successful in encouraging fiscal management across the way. Was their tactic an appropriate one?

Mr. Blenkarn: We got them back in the House for another shot at it.

Mr. Riis: Indeed. There is no question that the Government of Canada has misread the economy of Canada.

I listened with interest a few nights ago when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sat down to his three-act play to explain to Canadians the difficulties which they were facing, as if all of us lived in some mystical world, some never-never land, and were unaware of the problems. He laid them out in his very philosophical and articulate way so that everyone would understand how difficult things were today in Canada.

Then the Minister of Finance rose in the House yesterday, backtracked on the two previous budgets and changed a number of taxation policies which the previous minister of Finance had brought in. The previous minister had changed his budget 36 times. The new Minister of Finance changed it another eight times. They do not know what they are doing. They do not know if they are coming or going, it is obvious. What kind of leadership are these people providing for

Supplementary Borrowing Authority

Canadians? The Minister of Finance rose in the House and said that resources needed to be developed—a profound statement—that forests needed to be replenished, that fisheries needed careful husbandry, that we needed new production techniques established in Canada, that we must develop a new technological basis in the country, and that we needed increased investment. The people across the way have been living in a fairyland. There is no question that Canadians were not aware of all of these needs many, many years ago. It was not a revelation to hear that we need to manage our forests more adequately and to seek more investment in Canada's growth. Why has it taken these people so long to realize what Canadians have known for a long time?

The New Democratic Party had a task force which toured the country last December. We visited every part of the country. We held open hearings and asked everyone who was interested to come forward.

Mr. Blenkarn: We had 63 Members out. How many did you have out?

Mr. Riis: When this man to my right has nothing else to say, he bleats and yells out. I will listen very carefully to his profound words in a moment.

An Hon. Member: Profound!

Mr. Riis: Did I say, "profound"? I meant preposterous.

In our task force hearings last December the people of Canada made it very clear that they understood the seriousness of the economic situation facing Canada. They understood where the unemployment figures in the country were going, the problems in the fisheries, in the agriculture, mining, service and quaternary sectors. They understood that we were facing unprecedented levels of personal, business and farm bankruptcies. They recognized that the tax proposals of the previous minister of Finance were inappropriate, were thought through in a rather casual and lackadaisical way, and that they were ill-conceived. As a result, week after week we have seen those same tax proposals gutted from the Government's position. For the Government to take a year from last November to come before this House to make a very profound statement on the difficulties facing Canadians is not only disappointing but it is rather irritating as well. The Minister of Finance stood up and said to those in western Canada, "We have good news for you. We are going to set aside \$400 million for the western Canadians." Do you not remember, Mr. Speaker, that not long ago we were promised \$4 billion in the Western Development Fund?

● (2020)

Mr. Blaikie: It shrank.

Mr. Riis: It shrank. As the previous speaker indicated, I think the Government put the zero in the wrong place. It was not \$4 billion because we now find out it is only \$400 million.