

*Time Allocation*

The economy is in a very precarious state right now. According to Statistics Canada, 1982 was the worst year for the economy since 1933. As one indication in the manufacturing industry alone, the capacity utilization in the fourth quarter was at its lowest level, around 63 per cent, since Statistics Canada began keeping records more than 20 years ago. In the last quarter, real GNP dropped 2.8 per cent from 1981 on a year to year basis. It is the first time since figures were kept on a quarterly basis that GNP has dropped in six consecutive quarters.

Against this dismal background, the leading indicators show that there will be a recovery this year, but that if it occurs, it appears as though it will be a very weak one. For instance, Dominion-Ames Securities gives 50/50 odds of a 1 per cent GNP growth this year and possibly 3 per cent next year. Wood Gundy is a little more optimistic, predicting that real output will grow at a 3.6 per cent annual rate between the fourth quarter of last year and the fourth quarter of 1984. The Conference Board forecasts real growth of only 1.2 per cent this year. All of these predictions indicate that this is not an economy which can easily manage to absorb borrowing of the magnitude the Government is running up.

The key to recovery will be confidence. Consumers and investors must have confidence that there will be jobs and markets before they will begin spending and investing. By demonstrating that it is bankrupt in terms of money and policies, the Government threatens to kill confidence and choke off our fragile chance for recovery, because confidence dies when Government plays with the numbers and gives forecasts which prove to be wrong or refuses to provide any forecasts at all. It dies when Government stifles debate and refuses to explain and justify its spending and avoid accountability.

The Government must explain where it is going and what it is doing with our money. We must start reducing the deficit. We must start limiting Government spending. We must start creating a positive and open investment climate. We must start reducing the burden of Government and unnecessary regulation. There are positive measures which can be put in place. The Government is clearly not able to make those moves.

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, I quite frankly do not believe that we are hearing Hon. Members rise today to speak against the motion which has been introduced to allocate time for discussion of Bill C-143. I suspect that to the general public, allocating time sounds like a reasonable gesture.

**Some Hon. Members:** It is.

**Mr. Riis:** However, what it means is that the Government has decided to stop debate on the question.

**Some Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Mr. Riis:** It has decided to gag debate. It has decided that it has had enough at this stage of the proceedings and that it is

no longer prepared to continue with this open, free parliamentary discussion.

The Liberals say: "Listen, we have spent nearly seven days discussing Bill C-143, and certainly after seven days we have heard enough". I think the Government needs to be reminded that we are discussing a Bill requesting authority to borrow \$19 billion. That amounts to something like \$2.7 billion a day. If the Government thinks that is enough public discussion and examination at this critical stage of principle, then I think the Government has once again shown us that it has lost touch with reality.

I could not believe the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Cosgrove) as he stood in his place today and said: "Listen, those people in the Opposition are feigning shock and amazement. They are bluffing. They are acting surprised when they obviously are not."

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Riis:** I would ask the Minister of State for Finance whether he has spoken to a normal person in the last six months. Has he gone out and sat in the coffee shops and gone up and down the streets of his constituency?

**An Hon. Member:** Yes, he has.

**Mr. Riis:** Has he spoken to a single normal person in this country? If he has, then he knows very well that Bill C-143 is causing everyone in the country to shake their heads in utter disbelief. Then the Minister went on to say: "But yes, they want their tax returns". What do tax returns have to do with Bill C-143? Again it demonstrates the inability of certain Hon. Members opposite to deal with and grasp the seriousness of the request which is before Parliament today.

I want to remind the Minister of State for Finance that most Canadians admire the concept of Parliament and strongly care about this institution. This is evident from one end of the country to the other. We have seen it develop over hundreds of years, but it has now progressed to a point at which the Government of Canada is making a mockery of the institution of Parliament by going against the very fundamental nature of Parliament. After all, when one considers the fundamental mandate of Parliament, one finds that it is to collect taxes and to spend those collected taxes wisely. Bill C-139 indicates that this is not being done with any sense of justice, fairness and fair play.

While certain institutions are having their marginal tax rate reduced, most Canadians are having it increased. People earning taxable incomes in excess of \$133,000 will have a marginal tax rate drop of 10 percentage points.

Certain institutions in the country, and I will only name the Royal Bank of Canada as an example, will be able to use the existing tax structure to accumulate profits. Last year, 1982, which was a so-called difficult year for the banks, there were profits in excess of \$320 million. How many dollars in taxes did the Royal Bank of Canada pay last year? I did not pay a single penny in income tax. That is the kind of news received