

him in planning of the forthcoming opposition day. However, the opposition should refrain from telling the Canadian people that it is possible at the same time to reduce inflation, bring down interest rates, maintain the value of the Canadian dollar and not to experience an impact on unemployment. Surely they have economists who can make calculations and projections just as good as ours. It is my view that as responsible Members of Parliament, our friends opposite should as soon as possible take positive action on construction and housing and this is why I join the Minister of Public Works in urging them to pass Bill C-89 without further delay.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that the budget introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) has never been questioned by any of the government members. We had healthy discussions with the Minister of Finance, his parliamentary secretary, and the Right Hon. Prime Minister, and I think it is the role of Members of Parliament to examine the budget and work for the wellbeing of their constituents. This is why, Mr. Speaker, on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues who also will have an opportunity to express their views, I say that tonight at five o'clock, for the information of the hon. member who spoke before me, I shall vote with the government to allow it to immediately implement the measures provided for in the budget and I hope for a most favourable response within the shortest time to the measures that we have announced.

● (1540)

[*English*]

I want to reiterate my wish that opposition members support Bill C-89 within a short period of time so that construction can start in the riding of Montreal-Mercier and that it will receive all the benefits of the budget.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks, I would like to say that the motion before the House today is quite relevant and quite challenging for the majority of members who are anxious to defend the interests of their constituents.

First, I would like to remind the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent), whom I have always regarded as being basically honest, that when he refers to the statement of our financial critic to the effect that we support higher interest rates, particularly in housing as he pointed out, he cannot be taken seriously. I suggest he is making a serious mistake in light of our comments and the evidence in support of our position. It has long since been demonstrated that the Progressive Conservative Party was and still is prepared to advocate preferential interest rates in such a sensitive field as housing. I simply had to say this because I have the impression that the leader of the New Democratic Party misinterpreted the comments of our spokesman. I have a few words as well for the minister responsible for housing who, for the second consecutive week, has tried to defend the pitiful performance of his department.

*Supply*

He said that the Canadian people were suffering, so he certainly cannot be accused of falsifying the truth, but of course he failed to add that he has clear-cut responsibilities with respect to such a major industry as housing which is dying. He went on to say that the Canadian people will pass judgment on us. We are quite prepared to let the Canadian people judge the debate and the fight we are having today and which began long ago. For instance, how can we explain why he did not grab this opportunity to endorse openly the recommendations made by the group of ten Liberals? How can we explain that he did not jump at the chance of saying to them: Listen, I do not see how you can possibly support the government today, so in response to a justifiable, urgent and pressing request, we will not hesitate to support you because we readily admit that it is an urgent matter and that a contingency plan is required for the housing sector. He did not say either that yesterday his officials publicly stated that the activities in the housing construction sector will not start before six months and that they will be rather sluggish during the following six months.

His silence about the recommendation made by the group of which I would heartily support can only be interpreted as a categorical refusal. I also heard the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) tell us a somewhat similar story to that he told us last week and to me it was a sorry spectacle because he was trying once again to make Canadians believe that programs conceived from day to day will help the economy via a similar manner as a fireman is called upon to put out a fire. Therefore he has proven to us that his government has let the situation deteriorate to the point that programs have to be adjusted daily because they can no longer meet the emergency conditions set out in the proposal we are submitting today. The Minister of Employment and Immigration, following the example of his colleagues who first blamed the Americans for the state of our economy and then the Quebec government, as did the previous speaker, the member for Montreal-Mercier (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette), for the economic conditions in that province now accuses unions and management but never the government of being responsible for the situation.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, since 1968 we have witnessed a downturn in economic activity, not to mention other areas, since we are now dealing with the economy. In spite of all the figures quoted today, those to which the Minister of Employment and Immigration referred to, it remains that he omitted to mention the 1,500,000 Canadians unemployed because for every job he creates two are lost. I do not think that this is the way to build a viable country.

Our proposal, Madam Speaker, is nothing more than a minimum requirement to correct on one hand an intolerable situation in view of the problems faced by our young people from 18 to 25 years of age and on the other hand to stimulate the construction industry. That is what we would like to do. Is there anything more noble and more legitimate, than calling