

those terms or publish a national white paper in those terms, you could start to make a solid correction to some of the very serious problems and attitudes of the government and put some responsibility into the political forces in this country.

I think that the comments that came from the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville and the Minister of Finance today are very significant. This is an area in which I would certainly like to participate in the years ahead in trying to resolve the very serious problem of providing services at a cost that can be validly measured.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Chairman, the House is now studying Bill C-56 in committee of the whole. At the beginning of this study this afternoon, the spokesman for the official opposition and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) seemed to be at grips with each other, to oppose each other on totally different principles. However, a few moments ago, they both seemed to be in complete agreement and, to repeat an old expression often used in the House, it was the same old gang. They leave the impression, Mr. Chairman, that they are opposed on principles, but when the time comes to take a decision they reach agreement. It seems to me they both obey the same commander, a commander we do not know, a commander who is not in the House, a commander whose authority is strong, who is outside the House and yet is able to command not only the old parties referred to as the traditional parties of the House, but also to parties in other legislatures, in other legislative assemblies. Mr. Chairman, I have already expressed my views on Bill C-56 on second reading or during the debate on the amendment moved by the leader of the New Democratic Party. At that time, Mr. Chairman, I said that when the government wants to pass legislation likely to serve the interests of high finance, it always manages to include, as in the case of Bill C-56, proposals which will please all members of parliament and serve at the same time the interests of ordinary workers.

● (2122)

This is the case of Bill C-56. It contains provisions on which we agree, but it also contains a provision on which we are in complete disagreement because it goes against our constitution, our constitution that we must obey and follow as long as it is not replaced by a totally Canadian constitution, made by Canadians, for Canadians and for the whole of Canada. I already had the opportunity to comment on this matter during a debate that took place in 1977 and which was brought about by a motion entitled "National Unity". At that time, at the very start of the debate, I immediately emphasized that a debate on Canadian unity could not produce anything new that would allow hope that Canada would really be the nation of all Canadians, regardless of their language or ethnic origin.

At that time, I said that it was the duty of the 264 members sitting in this institution to work earnestly so that all Canadi-

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ans could be proud of a true nation that would be called Canada and in which they could live in harmony. Mr. Chairman, I value harmony much more than unity because if you want to have harmony within a family, you will also inevitably have unity. The same is true in a parish. The same is true in a county. The same is true in a province. The same is true in a country. And to live in harmony, Mr. Chairman, it must be acknowledged in practice at all costs that all citizens are equal before the law, that every province of our country, all ten of them, should enjoy the same advantages, the same rights, and that they should get the same income to be able to assume their responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, Bill C-56 is the logical result of the statement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) last April 10, in which he informed this House of the various policies that parliament might implement to alleviate the burden of Canadian taxpayers, to provide every Canadian with a higher income, to enable every head of family, every individual to face his responsibilities. This way and means motion on income tax was followed by a legislation known as the Bill C-56. After the first reading of that bill, we witnessed the opposition of the Quebec government, a legitimate government, as it was elected following a general election on November 15, 1976. Some saw in the results of that election a rejection by the people in Quebec of a weak government, a government that was shirking its responsibilities in the face of events occurring in the province of Quebec at that time, when there were strikes after strikes in the private sector and in the public sector, and Quebecers were asked at that election to pass judgment on the administration of our province, the province of Quebec. The people in Quebec chose an alternative government that had not mentioned in its electoral program its basic objective, the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada.

Mr. Chairman, Canadians and Quebecers voted then for a good government. They wished to express their desire to have a sound government, able to face its responsibilities and to solve our problems. Since then, Mr. Chairman, that government has made every effort with all kinds of mistakes, of course, like any government which acts, because a government which does nothing does not make any mistakes.

● (2132)

But a government which takes decisions also makes mistakes, as we do here in Ottawa. Mr. Trudeau's government has not only always done the right things; it has also made mistakes but it is through the experience of our mistakes that we learn how to correct them and do something in line with the common good. So, Mr. Chairman, this government, our national government, has presented a budget.

This afternoon I heard a member asking a question, the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) who was asking: But if you had to make a decision at that time what would