

development, interprovincial trade barriers and labour management relations.

The Conservative government has failed to realize that education, research and environmental policies are the building blocks of economic growth. These failures have caused serious problems for Canadians from coast to coast.

The current Prime Minister of Canada told this House in 1983: "It does happen that a government sits too long. It does become exhausted and it does become bankrupt of ideas".

I think Canadians everywhere recognize the truth of those words. This Conservative government has lost the confidence of the Canadian people. An election should be called. Canadians have suffered enough.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I was glad that my colleague started her speech by reading the motion before us today, and I will do the same because I want the Canadian people to know exactly what we are dealing with today.

The motion reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government is incapable of providing leadership and direction in the economic and social affairs of the nation—

The opposition has been clamouring for elections. When you call for elections to be held, you do so because you intend to campaign and win and eventually come to power. God forbid this political formation was to come to power with the same leader today.

Twice in the past this leader had the opportunity to put government finance in order. Each time—and I think that many share this view—he failed. Let me give you a couple of examples. The Leader of the Opposition was the President of Treasury Board from 1974 to 1976. Normally, the role of Treasury Board is to veto the expenditures the various departments are planning. However, government expenditures increased by 16.3 per cent in 1975–76 and 14.6 per cent in 1976–77. Within two years this Leader of the Opposition who aspires to become Prime Minister of Canada authorized the following increases in expenditures: a 34 per cent increase in salary and wages; 18 per cent in communication and

Supply

transportation expenses; 43 per cent in government rent expenses; 53 per cent in expenses associated with machinery and equipment, and, finally, 38 per cent for professional and special services.

That is not all. Later on, the Leader of the Opposition became Minister of Finance from 1977 to 1979. During 1978–79 expenditures went up 10.3 per cent and for 1978–79 the deficit grew because of an increase of the national debt in excess of 50 per cent within two years.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this parliamentarian, this Leader of the Opposition, likes to spend and to borrow. In this House he has opposed just about every expenditure restraint measure put forward by this government, while requesting additional financing for a slew of programs and other expenditures.

The prospect of this political formation coming to power worries me. I would like to ask the hon. member if the Canadian people can afford such a leader in terms of the management of government finance?

[*English*]

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member on the opposite side of the House for her comments.

It never ceases to amaze me that we have had a government in power for eight years that cannot resist speaking on records of previous governments and will not address its own record as the government of this country.

Since the previous speaker raised the issue of what the Liberals have done in the past, I would like to talk also about that. Under previous Liberal governments, the people of this country had prosperity. The finest social programs in this country were implemented under previous Liberal governments.

Our medicare system was initiated by a Liberal government. We have our old age security pensions, thanks to Liberal governments. We have our social safety net program, thanks to previous Liberal governments. We had the highest standard of living that we have ever had in this country under previous Liberal governments.

I do not believe that any Liberal government of the past has anything to be ashamed of. We can hold our head high. We can be proud.