

Canada virtually by himself. I believe that there are members of this House who make up Parliament and they are entitled to discussions and must also call on all of those who can help find solutions. Coming back particularly to the province of Quebec, I believe that there is a tendency to criticize present decisions, aspirations or recommendations of the province of Quebec.

It is no secret, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we like to show a little partisan spirit once in a while. My party has never even considered negotiating the separation of Quebec. It would be false to imply that. We believe that there would be greater acceptance by the provinces within a constitutional framework much more flexible than the one structured by this government, a framework in which it would be possible to meet the aspirations of the provinces.

This is my party's rationale. I believe there is ample room between the two extremes facing us—on the one hand Premier Lévesque's option and on the other the status quo or rigidity of the government—to present a flexible program enabling the provinces to find the true dialogue they have requested for so long and a true participation at the negotiation level, a framework in which we would feel free to take decisions of national importance after having consulted the provinces. This is the type of federalism I believe we want and which would go with a new Canada. This is the main problem for the time being and I believe that the government should try immediately to prove . . .

● (2050)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired. He may, however, continue by unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is our responsibility to cooperate as fully as possible with the province in which we live and I think that the 60 members of the House, first of all the government members, then my colleagues and the members of the Social Credit Party agree with me that it is urgent that we prove to Quebecers that it is possible to achieve or bring back a certain progress which would be profitable for Quebec within the present framework, provided we give it added flexibility.

It would be dangerous indeed, Mr. Speaker, to simply disregard the Quebec administration or try to embarrass it, just for the fun of it. What we must do, and I repeat it for my colleagues of the House, is to show Quebecers before the referendum that it is possible to improve the economic situation of their province, to prove to all these Quebecers that we did not achieve this progress outside Confederation but within it, and so show them it is not necessary to divide our country to guarantee Quebecers even a minimum of their rightful aspirations, whether cultural or economic.

Economic Policy

And I think that no Canadian would or will be reluctant to endorse any measure allowing Quebecers to meet their expectations the same way we from Quebec wish all people from all provinces to achieve that minimum of most legitimate expectations, for different reasons maybe, because of a different mentality.

I should also like, Mr. Speaker, to get this government to consider in the budget those funds that will be allocated to agriculture. We know that the province of Ontario also went through difficult times last year as a result of dairy policies. I know milk producers are waiting anxiously for the announcement of the dairy policy for 1977.

● (2100)

We know that in Quebec particularly from 5,000 to 6,000 milk producers are now out of business. Those who are still in business have probably been lucky or privileged, but they are quite concerned about the future of their operation. I hope that the Minister of Finance, in his budget speech, will provide some very special subsidies and will urge his government to absorb a good part of the powdered milk exports and ease by the same token the hardships suffered by the milk producers, which are the two main problems in that industry.

Mr. Speaker, I would not want to take undue advantage of my allotted time. We all realize, I am sure, the importance of this debate, and we all appreciate the situation in which Canada now finds itself because of the fantastic number of unemployed. We urge the government to show leadership. It can be sure of getting the co-operation of this party so long as it will bring forward positive or corrective measures that will contribute to the betterment of the community. Certainly we cannot congratulate the government, so long as it has no policy.

As parliament members, we must criticize the government from time to time and require it to show more leadership than it has until now to alleviate the situation. A continuing lack of policy to remedy the situation will show not only to Parliament members but to the majority of Canadians that the government has actually lost the confidence of the people and that we need an alternative. We hope to be able to do our duty as opposition members, to be very demanding and to support any positive measures so long as they meet the aspirations and interests of all Canadians.

Mr. Arthur Portelance (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I know that hon. members would rather hear the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) responsible for unemployment policy and the creation of jobs. He is not here this evening because he is appearing before the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration precisely to give detailed explanations about the various policies in his department.

With your permission, in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary, I should like however to inform you about what is being done by the government and the Department of Manpower and Immigration. My hon. colleagues are aware no