

Supply

fairer than the present tax system with all its exemptions and exceptions. This is something Canadians are asking for and the House should be entertaining as soon as possible. It should be a part of the exercise as we look to fix our finances.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also listened closely to the speech of the hon. member. Like all the members who took the floor today—I have been sitting here all day, although I never intervened—I agree that the Canadian situation is very difficult right now.

I also think that the government has a tendency to study, to set up committees, to ask for reports and, generally speaking, to postpone any decision. For 20 years we have heard the same speeches from the various ministers of finance. We could take any of them and reissue them, they are all the same.

There are two opposition parties in the House. The Bloc Québécois proposes a very clear option: let us review completely the Canadian taxation policy. We sincerely believe that without a complete overhaul of taxation we are going nowhere fast.

The Reform Party's option is to cut deeply where it really matters, into social programs. Unlike my Liberal friends, I do not believe that our Reform colleagues are fundamentally evil. I think they have done a serious economic study of the situation.

• (1630)

[*English*]

If the Reform and the Bloc parties do not do anything, Canada is going to go bankrupt right away. We have to do something.

I would like to ask a question of my colleague on an economic matter. Most people know that we want to make Quebec sovereign and we seriously think that this will become true within a few months from now.

Most Canadians actually believe in two assumptions concerning Quebec. The first is we are a bunch of troublemakers, politically speaking, because we are never happy with what we get. Second, we receive much more money from Canada than what we put in. A lot of people believe these assumptions.

I would like to ask this question of my colleague. Does he not think that a sovereign Quebec would be part of the solution for Canada, depending of course that we take out of Canada our fair share of the debts and assets? That is exactly what we intend to do. Would this not be part of the solution for Canada?

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, certainly we agree with a lot of the things that were said.

More important, what I have learned from visiting Quebec a number of times is that the problems in Quebec are the same as the problems in Alberta or in any other part of Canada. We are all the same. We are concerned about the debt and deficit. We are concerned about crime. We are concerned about all of the same things. We are the same. That is the first myth that we have to dispel, that there is any difference between us because there is not.

The people in my part of the country do not hate the people of Quebec. The people in Quebec certainly do not hate the people of Alberta. We need to dispel these myths.

Economically, I believe firmly that as members of the G-7, in negotiating world trade as we are now actively doing, that the bigger the unit the better we are going to be economically.

I hope that the people of Quebec look at the big picture. We are going to be a trading unit of the Americas. I have said that in this House a lot of times. North and South America together are a trading unit. The smaller the unit the more difficult it will be balancing our budgets and taking care of our people.

We have to look at the big picture. The big picture says that the EU is going to get common currency and is going to come together more and more, that the seven tigers of the Orient are going to come together more and more and that the Americas are going to come together more and more. Rather than thinking of little units we should be thinking about bigger units. That is really the success of this country. This is the best country in the world and we need to save it with Quebec.

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to participate in the debate on the motion tabled by the hon. member for Capilano—Howe Sound.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Finance the items that are included in the member's motion have been front and centre on my personal agenda for well over a year. There is a reason for that. The reason is that our government understands and takes very seriously the fiscal circumstances that face this nation. We are committed to working responsibly to manage the deficit and the debt and to responding to the needs and the interests of Canadians.

We are doing that in a very dynamic way. It is that process that I would like to refer to in my comments here this afternoon.

About a year ago the Minister of Finance came to us in the House and invited us all to participate in the first ever prebudget debate. He invited us as members to bring the concerns, the issues, the strategy, the direction of our constituents, Canadians, to this House of Commons and share them with him.