

*The Budget—Mr. Gustafson*

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons) accepted a question and the question is being asked, if he wishes to answer it.

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I reply to my hon. friend in English because my French is inadequate and I would appreciate it if he would repeat his question. I will get my little plug and put it in my ear. We are not technically oriented down my way and it takes a little time to get the plug in the ear.

[Translation]

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Speaker, I am willing to start all over again. First of all, I should like to congratulate the hon. member on his eloquence. He speaks so well that it is a pleasure to listen to him. However, he gloated over a great many things, but if he were to speak on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, what solutions would he propose to solve the problems with which we are faced now? If he were sitting where the Progressive Conservatives are sitting now, what would he do? That is my question. If he is willing to answer it, fine.

[English]

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard) for the question. First of all, I would not sock it to the low and middle income earners. I would not raise unemployment insurance premiums. I would not make promises about income tax and then reverse them. If the hon. member wants my platform in any more detail, I will be delighted to meet him in the lobby and have a good chat.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, it is a real privilege for me to rise in this House and make my speech at this very serious hour.

**An hon. Member:** The first and last.

**Mr. Gustafson:** The timing goes this way, and it is a good proverb—the first shall be last and the last shall not be first.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the people of the constituency of Assiniboia who are very serious people. They are very serious about the situation that faces us now. I represent a people who are a productive people, hard-working people. I do not stand before you tonight as a professional politician; I stand before you to represent a people who know what it is to work hard and to produce. We have seen the production of the hard working people eroded by the socialists who are now hard to discern on the opposite side of the House because the philosophy of the left camp has climbed into the other camp, under the leadership of the former government. It is hard, though, to discern just where that side of the House stands. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Canada will decide—those hard working people whom we represent.

I should like to tell hon. members something about the constituency of Assiniboia, Mr. Speaker. It produces one-quar-

[Mr. Allard.]

ter of all the wheat grown in Saskatchewan. There are 1,000 square miles of coal at Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan. In the constituency there are 150 square miles of coal in the Estevan area which also has major oil fields, the Estevan oil field, the Weyburn oil field, the Goodwater oil field, and the Midale oil field. I know what it is to represent people who produce the goods, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Canada tonight are not happy with the flippant mood in this House. Canada is standing at the crossroads, the result of 16 years of government that did not well represent the hard working and productive population, those in the factories, on the farms, in small business. Those people do not think that this is a light matter. On May 22 they voted under conviction, and if we are called upon to go to the polls again, they will vote under conviction this time as well.

I rose to speak on the budget, Mr. Speaker, and I should like to say a few words on that subject. I am very pleased to stand in this House with men like the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) who gave great leadership, and who will give great leadership.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gustafson:** I am pleased to stand in this House with men like the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) who brought us a good budget, a hard budget, but an honest one, and who will in days to come, God willing, bring us many more honourable budgets. In this very serious moment Canadians are looking for men of determination, men of good will, but men who are willing to do the hard thing and the right thing. In this budget the minister did the right thing.

Leaders and business across the country and in other fields have acknowledged that this budget is right for Canada at this time. I would challenge hon. members opposite that if they think this budget is not right in the minds of the people, let them ask the public of Canada.

Let me tell you what a productive people have done, Mr. Speaker. In the year 1900, 97 per cent of all the people in North America were engaged in agriculture. Today, less than 5 per cent are engaged in agriculture, but that 5 per cent is producing enough to feed all of North America and a good portion of the world.

What did the opposition accomplish in the field of energy, Mr. Speaker? Canada is a strong country. It can produce energy as it can produce food. These are two important commodities that we will hear a great deal about in the future—food and energy. What does the opposition do to bring into being and to help exploration and production in this country? In 1975 we were self-sufficient in oil. But today we are running far behind because there was a lack of vision, a lack to see the tremendous challenge to produce. What has our budget done? What has the Minister of Finance seen and this government seen in the few short days we have had in this House? We have seen the vision of where Canada can go in energy.

● (2140)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!