

Economic Conditions

hours now made us smile now and again. Indeed I wonder if some of my colleagues here in the House are really aware of what is going on in Canada.

Earlier I was listening to the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) who, in an impassioned speech, managed to criticize just about everything that is going on in Canada, but he never did come up with any alternatives. Of course I have known the hon. member for Joliette for 15-odd years and he has always made a lot of speeches but never did he offer concrete and worth-while proposals.

I had a personal experience when I met with farmers in my riding because we are neighbours. The member for Joliette remained silent for four hours, unable as he was to make one single suggestion. The member for Berthier (Mr. Yanakis) was with me at the time and we tried to find solutions, in fact we did find solutions to the problems experienced by farmers in our region. Everything was settled a few weeks later and these farmers belonging to the Agricultural Producers' Union of Joliette wrote us a letter to thank us for our work, for our discussions and for the ensuing decisions but in the letter they did not even mention the name of the member for Joliette because he had not uttered one word.

And then he accused the government of failing in every economic, fiscal, monetary and social endeavour, again without proposing anything at all. His only real discovery during the few months he was in power as a minister was to appoint himself patronage minister. That was his greatest accomplishment but unfortunately the electors decided that Canada just did not need such a minister. It was a miracle that he barely squeezed in at the election of February 18 last, Mr. Speaker, but we will have another crack at him next time around.

I heard him refer to the famous Conservative budget and say that all heads of businesses and multinationals readily endorsed the budget but he simply forgot to point out that the people of Canada did not share that view. That is why the government was turfed out and the Liberal party regained power.

I heard the hon. member say, as did the former finance minister, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), that their famous budget featured a tax credit for mortgage interest and property taxes.

● (0500)

Mr. Speaker, except for the former finance minister and the member for Joliette and most likely all members on the other side of the House, everybody knows that the proposed tax credit was not in the budget. That was a separate measure which the Progressive Conservative government could have passed when they were in power but, given their lack of intelligence or their incompetence, they opted for a vote on the budget and were defeated. I recall full well that at the time five of us on the Liberal benches had expressed support for that bill, the government was certain it would be adopted but

they chose to drop it. And now everybody is being blamed for blocking that outstanding measure because the opposition parties of the day, the Liberals and the New Democrats, defeated the government on a budget which did not have anything to do with the tax credit measure.

The hon. member for Joliette criticized milk quotas and the 1976 dairy policy, the one year among all others when the government may have made mistakes, but they were all corrected the following year. We had the best dairy policy in the world in 1977, 1978, 1979 and even 1980 but of course the hon. member for Joliette was not there to say so.

In his speech the member for Joliette managed to include the constitution, patriation, the works. I have some doubts about his sincerity when I recall seeing him on the same podium as his pals Laberge and Parizeau, two avowed separatists. I wonder just how sincere he can be when he takes the floor in the House to speak about patriation and to defend Canada. It does make us wonder, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member also voices concern over great projects which are falling through in Quebec. Perhaps he should feel the same way about those which are not being carried out in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, it is only normal that we should ask questions when we see a provincial premier decide on his own to shut off the valve and cut his oil production to the tune of 130,000 barrels a year and when we hear that the same premier has put a hold on two major projects to develop tar sands. And we can wonder as well when we learn that the Premier of Quebec refuses to let a pipeline through his provincial territory. When you see this same government drag its feet before developing a road network or even a fast transit system to and from Mirabel, you are bound to ask yourself this question: Who are really those who stand in the way of this country's development?

Mr. Speaker, it seems the package deal which was offered in last October's budget has been mostly ignored by the members opposite. They disparage it; they had better read it again and ponder over its essential points. I would like to repeat them for the sake of the hon. members on the other side because it seems to me they have forgotten about them. The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) said that public expenses would not grow faster than the economy; that the deficit would be progressively reduced over the next three years, but moderately next year because of the expected slow economic recovery rate. I am sure everybody agrees with that, and will even more so as the recovery gets under way. I hope that this aim will be achieved in 1982, 1983 and 1984. And then, the Minister of Finance indicated that any increase in individual and corporate tax rates would be avoided as much as possible. I think that when we decided to maintain private indexation in 1981 it was a measure of the kind we had already proposed previously. Indexation will take \$1,580 million out of the federal income tax individual taxpayers would have had to pay otherwise next year. The minister also mentioned that aid to the developing