

Supply

Before we get that generous there are a few things we would like to say to the gentleman from Beauharnois—Salaberry and the group he is obliged to represent here this morning.

For at least a couple of years, and indeed more than that, this country has been facing twin crises. Our economy faces very serious problems, problems that transcend even the current lingering recession and, of course, second and important also, national unity continues to be uncertain.

My friend from Simcoe Centre interjects that the national unity issue has been with us since 1982. She is almost right. She is right except for the date. She is slightly off on the date. She was not here at that time, so she can be excused for slipping on the date slightly.

The issue was put to bed in 1982, except there was a separatist from Quebec who would not have signed anything anyway. Everybody knows that including the Prime Minister right now who said in 1982 that was the case, who congratulated the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, for his leadership. He has since tried to rewrite history a bit, so she is almost right. She had a slight slippage, but I am sure she meant, in kindness to her, 1984. That is when the damage on this one was done.

There is an old rule, and it is worth following even in this Chamber, even in the government of a country. It is: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. If she is interested in knowing why we are in the constitutional mess that we are in today a good part of the reason is because in 1982 and 1984 somebody tried to fix something that was not really broke.

She interjects again: "Quebec was left out". A separatist premier from Quebec elected to be left out. No matter what the offer was in 1982 that would have been the case. I appeal to her good sense to not be rewriting history. Her own leader in 1982 said essentially what I am saying at this particular point.

[Translation]

As for the Constitution, it seems that the parliamentary committee, several provincial commissions and half a dozen constitutional conferences, including the one in Toronto in late May and more recently the one held here in Ottawa, last week I think, moved the constitutional

reform project forward. I hope that the governments will use the opportunities to continue to seek a solution.

As I will explain later, the sooner we complete this constitutional reform, the better for our economy.

[English]

There are those who say that they are fed up with the Constitution, and I am one who says that from time to time, and that we should just stop talking about it. However, we cannot set the Constitution to one side for the moment because we cannot have an economy, strong or otherwise, if we do not have a country.

That uncertainty must be resolved, though the debate on that issue is for another time. However, in speaking to this motion I wanted to put the economy in the context of the national unity issue because they go hand in hand. It is difficult to intelligently debate one without being at least cognizant of the other.

Having said that, let me come to the issue immediately at hand, which is the request of the government that we kiss and make up, that we let bygones be bygones, that we give it another \$48.4 billion so it can go out and spend some more like drunken sailors.

Let us review, let us go back as recently as the latest budget by the latest Minister of Finance, the gentleman from Alberta. He presented his first budget in February of this year.

We might return to the words of the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of my party. Last November he laid out a five-point plan that would guide a future Liberal government in restoring Canada's long-term industrial strength.

His plan, which we stand by today and will stand by as a government, included a call for policies to promote economic growth and a better balance between inflation fighting and other economic goals.

In January of this year my party unveiled a further five-point emergency economic recovery program. Let us examine the elements of that program announced in January. It included a 5 per cent down payment for first time home buyers, it would allow the use of RRSP moneys to purchase homes, and set up a national shared cost infrastructure program that would include projects already on the shelf at the municipal level across this country. It included more basic skills training and emergency federal funding for food banks.