

*The Budget—Mr. Clermont*

expressing my appreciation to the Speaker for his courtesy in welcoming me in this house, in November last. Therefore, at the beginning of my remarks, I should like to extend to him my most sincere thanks. I should like also to underline the ability and impartiality which he has shown in the fulfilment of his presidential functions.

Since the debate on the speech from the throne has been cut down, at the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson), who wanted the government to introduce as soon as possible all legislation which might improve the present unemployment situation, I take this first opportunity which is offered me to make a few remarks.

I should like to thank the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinonge-Delanaudiere (Mr. Paul) for the kind words he had for me, in seconding the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

I congratulate the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Miss LaMarsh) for her resounding victory of October 31 last, when she doubled the majority obtained by her predecessor in 1958. I wish her a long and fruitful political career.

My congratulations also to the hon. members for Royal and Peterborough (Messrs. Flemming and Pitman) who were elected at the same time as I, on October 31 last.

Mr. Speaker, among those members who preceded me as representatives of the constituency of Labelle in this house, there is one name which comes to my mind, and it is that of Henri Bourassa, who sat here as a Liberal from 1896 to 1906 and from 1925 to 1935 as an independent.

Imagine my surprise when I read in the newspapers, during the by-election in Labelle, that Conservative speakers had made wide use of his name in their speeches. As if Mr. Bourassa had been one of their partisans.

I wonder what Mr. Bourassa would have said today about the census questionnaire. Surely, like me, he would have been among those who opposed question No. 10. He surely would have opposed it, like the electors of my constituency, like the members of the legislative assembly of Quebec who voted unanimously against it, like the Montreal municipal administration, like the association of French language educators, like the St. Jean Baptiste societies, like the chambers of commerce, like the Franco-Ontarian farmers' union, like the school boards, and so forth,

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who have asked this government to take the necessary steps to have removed from the questionnaire, in section 10, the words "Canadian" and "American," with reference to ethnic origin.

As you see, Mr. Speaker, the Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Sevigny) was wrong in claiming that the protests about the census were a balloon inflated by the Liberals. I would even go so far as to say that most groups that protested are independent, or possibly even supported this government in 1958.

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday one hon. member opposite stated that this government had achieved wonders, and that he had great confidence in the future of this country. I share his optimism with regard to the future of Canada, but if we consider the results of the four last by-elections, I can assure you that the people of Canada have lost confidence in this government. Never in the history of this country has any government so rapidly lost the confidence of the people than has the present government. In proof of this I would refer you to the recent report of the Canadian institute of public opinion.

Mr. Speaker, in 1957 this government had more members elected than had any previous government. In 1958, it got 54 per cent of the popular vote. Now, the latest survey made by the institute shows that in less than three years such confidence has been reduced by 15 per cent.

In that short period of time the government managed to break all records in the field of deficits, unemployment, unfulfilled promises and it will soon break another record, that of unpopularity.

Mr. Speaker, during my election campaign of last October 31, six ministers of the crown and a great number of members supporting the present government came into my constituency to campaign in favour of the Conservative candidate. Among them were the Associate Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Balcer), the Minister of Defence Production (Mr. O'Hurley), the Secretary of State (Mr. Dorion), the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Comtois), and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fulton). Other Conservative members also invaded the Labelle riding to extol the so-called achievements of the Conservative government and to make more promises, such as the construction of a television tower or satellite station at Mont Laurier.