

will affect social services in a few months can only increase in the years to come.

The third conclusion essentially applies to Quebec. For the first time in history, Quebecers will realize just how much it costs to be part of Canada. This will be costly and painful.

As you will recall, the Prime Minister's advisor himself recently went to Toronto to tell the Canadian intelligentsia that, the more Quebec would suffer, the more Quebecers would be tempted to stay in the Canadian Confederation. I will not comment on the morality of this statement. I think that it denotes stupidity more than anything else and that it will have exactly the opposite effect.

Of course, the argument is still the same: it is Quebec's fault. If things are going badly in Canada, it is Quebec's fault. The Prime Minister himself, who did not denounce his special adviser's remarks, thereby agreeing that Quebec should be made to suffer, was quoted in the newspapers yesterday or the day before as saying that if Quebecers rejected sovereignty, interest rates would drop by a few points. He was immediately challenged by the real economists in Canada, who found his comments extremely naive.

I wish to remind the Prime Minister of two little events that clearly show that there is no relation whatsoever between the disastrous state of Canadian public finance and Quebec's political role. At a time of great political stability, in the years that followed the rejection of Quebec sovereignty in 1980, Canada experienced the highest interest rates ever, which rose well beyond 20 per cent. Yet, Quebecers had just said Yes to Canada.

Hon. members will also remember 1986. Who was in power at that time? The Quebec Premier was Mr. Bourassa and the Canadian Prime Minister was Mr. Mulroney. This was, of course, a few years before the Meech Lake and Charlottetown failures. The Parti Quebecois was keeping very quiet in its little corner. Some people were even saying that the PQ was dead. The Bloc Quebecois did not exist. The dollar fell to 69 cents US. And it will probably return to that level very soon. I remind hon. members that there was then no link between the very quiet political situation in Quebec and the economic problems.

Of course, they have always said that it was Quebec's fault and they will continue to do so. They are repeating the same arguments they used in 1980. We remember very clearly what Mr. Trudeau told us: "We are putting our seats on the line in Canada. We are putting our seats on the line at the political level so that changes can be made". There was the patriation in 1982, which was never accepted by Quebecers, followed by the Meech Lake and Charlottetown failures.

They also tried to scare Quebecers—now they want to hurt us, but back then they wanted to scare us—by telling them that if

they chose sovereignty, they would be up to their necks in debt, unemployment and taxes. We said Yes to Canada at that time and since then the debt has risen from \$90 billion to \$548 billion, the unemployment rate has gone from 7.5 per cent to almost 10 per cent, the number of welfare recipients has nearly doubled, and taxes have never been so high. And that is only the beginning.

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In the end, by staying in the Canadian Confederation, we have experienced all the problems we were afraid would occur if we became a country. And things will get worse. Let me remind the House that the *Wall Street Journal* said that Canada was heading toward bankruptcy.

We recently held regional commissions on sovereignty, which attracted a large number of participants throughout Quebec. Quebecers submitted numerous briefs saying that they had two options: staying in the Canadian Confederation or making Quebec a country. They mostly said that they wanted more information.

In closing, I think that we should give Quebecers much more information on sovereignty issues, let the Canadian budget produce its effect and reveal exactly how much it costs to be part of Canada. I sincerely believe that when the right time comes, Quebecers will end up choosing the only possible option: making Quebec a country.

[English]

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to talk about the impact of the budget on my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk, and I would also like to talk a bit about agriculture.

We have heard over the last few days statements made by members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition and members of the Reform Party in terms of fairness in the budget. They are trying to suggest that in agriculture the cuts seem to be either in Quebec or in western Canada and that they are not spread fairly across the country.

When the Minister of Finance set out his budget proposals, and when the debates, negotiations and discussions with various groups were occurring beforehand, within this caucus and in talking to constituents in my riding, understanding the significance of the debt and the deficit and the problems we have there, what has been emphasized is the fact that there needs to be fairness. People across the country are prepared to do whatever is necessary to deal with the government's finances, as long as it is shown that what the government does, it does fairly across the country.

Let us take a look at agriculture. There were three significant areas that were cut in agriculture. The dairy subsidy was reduced by 30 per cent over a two-year period, the WGTA was cut, but,