

Supply

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman wishes to complain about the quality of the debate, I do not believe he should debase it even further by those remarks.

Mr. Peterson: I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that opposition members have been criticizing advertising, a large part of which goes toward the Canadian unity issue. I asked them what their alternatives are.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Now, that is different.

Mr. Peterson: I asked them their alternatives, and whether they had done their fighting. Do they think this is reasonable? Were they down there fighting? Advertising is a fundamental portion of our fight. They can answer to their own consciences. If they want to come back and give us some alternatives for keeping this country together, I would welcome that. In the meantime, I do not apologize for our efforts on behalf of the—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, there are those who will go to great lengths to conceal their sins. When one tries to extol patriotism, and I think we are all patriots in this House, as an excuse for advertising costing bundles of billions of dollars, then I submit to Your Honour that the House is being abused and the public is being deceived by the effort to make excuses for something which should not have been necessary in the first place.

It was rather interesting to note that the hon. member for Welland (Mr. Parent) and the hon. member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) were reading from the same script for the first five minutes or so. Someone must have got their wires crossed. However, that is the repetitive nature of the structure to Your Honour's right. I presume that the hon. member for Welland will probably want to apologize for his script when he gets back home. I do not think it is one which he will put into his weekly paper for public surveillance because it is certainly built on a foundation of sand. There is no stone to hold him up on that one.

I think we are seeing a situation where the government is trying to defend its own misdeeds. If ever there was anything which created disunity in this nation, it was the confrontation between this Liberal government and the province of Quebec. There is no time in 20 minutes to enunciate the total confrontation policies which have taken place.

Mr. Lapierre: When was the last time you were in Quebec? Tell us.

Mr. McCain: I have probably been in Quebec more recently than the hon. member has been in New Brunswick. I have probably read more Quebec press than the hon. member has ever thought to read of Atlantic press. Perhaps the hon. member would like to know about some of the divisionary

feelings which exist in Atlantic Canada and in western Canada. Perhaps the hon. member should come out of Quebec and take a look at all of Canada, which all hon. members of the House of Commons are supposed to do.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: Let us not become closeted in Quebec, in New Brunswick, in Ontario or in the prairies. Let us take a look at Canada as a whole. It is falling apart, province by province, as it is confronted with unrealistic situations caused by this government which does not seem to give a damn. I do not think there is any justification for this happening, and I would like to read a few little comments on government advertising which are dated as early as 1980. An article in *The Citizen* dated September 23, 1980, states:

The constitutional debate has convinced the government to quadruple the Canadian Unity Information Office budget to \$35 million.

It goes on to state:

This year alone, it has tendered advertising contracts worth close to \$9 million in an effort to sell the federal government to the people of Canada.

About \$6 million worth of these contracts were directly related to promoting the federal viewpoint on the Constitution.

Our opinion from this side of the House, from both opposition parties, was expressed clearly and well. It had such an impact upon the people's minds that the Government of Canada, as was suggested by the gentleman from Vancouver a few minutes ago, began to find that it required some assistance in advertising because its press releases, speeches, legislation, fund-raising dinners and political meetings were not serving its purpose. Therefore, in 1980 the government resorted to \$9 million worth of advertising to sell to the people of Canada what the people could not understand.

The government's theory was stated in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* dated August 2, 1980. The article stated:

The government's theory is: when you can't solve a problem, advertise. And when the government spends our money to convince us that everything is alright, we can be certain that everything is not.

Let us take another little look at an article from *The Winnipeg Tribune* dated August 2, 1980 which states:

Its almost incredible. In the midst of a worldwide energy crisis, the Canadian government is spending \$4 million on an advertising campaign to tell citizens there is no energy crisis. The campaign, which is under way and will run until next April, stresses that the country's energy future "is manageable and is being managed".

We have seen how it has been managed. The article continues:

Why should the federal government spend \$4 million of the people's money on a campaign to tell them something which just isn't so?

The fact is that this country's energy future isn't being managed, its being mismanaged.

Do not forget, Mr. Speaker, that we are not talking about today. We are talking about 1980. At the moment we are discussing a program, which has been evolving in an insidious fashion, to brainwash the people of Canada, as I think it is quite clearly charged in the *Tribune* when it stated: