

be brought in. They should meet the needs and answer the requirements of Canadians. In view of the promises made and not kept, how can the Prime Minister expect anyone to believe the promises he has made now and will make in the future?

May I now say something about the sales tax cut announced by the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the Prime Minister told a press conference that negotiations had been ongoing with the provinces for weeks and weeks on the issue of sales tax cuts. He reprimanded the Quebec minister for coming up with a new suggestion on 24 hours' notice. The actual truth is the four western premiers felt so strongly about the lack of consultation by the federal government in this move that they issued a joint statement last night criticizing the Minister of Finance for his unilateral action. Where is the truth in what the Prime Minister told the press yesterday? There is a misunderstanding somewhere. Someone is not stating the clear facts. I prefer to believe what the western premiers have said. The consultation referred to was far from adequate. Their representations are worth careful consideration by the government in this respect.

The net effect of the budget of the former minister of finance, and the mini-budget of October presented by this Minister of Finance, has been rising unemployment and spiralling inflation. If the House is sitting in the coming weeks and months, we will continue to hear the old song by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance that the measures have not taken effect yet and that we should give them a chance to work through the system. How long do Canadians have to wait? How long does it take to bring about economic sanity? One gets the impression the government is just biding time, waiting for something to happen. They used to blame the weather for our economic ills. Then it was world conditions. For a while it was women and young people who were the cause of our problems. At his press conference yesterday, it is my understanding the Prime Minister announced it was the world again. The government can go on biding its time, but the situation will not improve, not under this administration.

The only solution is to proceed in the manner the country has been looking for, which is an election. An election will result in a change in administration and bring in a government headed by the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Clark), who will meet this challenge and bring sanity, guidance and leadership to the country. My leader spoke very eloquently yesterday in outlining some of our party's policies to meet the challenges of our country, including a five-year development strategy to achieve some of those structural changes to which reference has been made. He referred to our proposal to put more investment into food production and food processing, to accelerate the development of our nation's oil sands and heavy oil reserves, to construct a reversible pipeline from the west to Atlantic Canada, to rebuild the fishing and ship building industry in Atlantic Canada, and to upgrade the loading facilities in the port of Vancouver.

● (1512)

My leader also referred to permanent tax cuts of \$300 per person to help stimulate demand and production. He referred

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to our policy to freeze public service hirings and thereby cut the public service. He expressed the importance of sunset laws which should be introduced. He referred to a freedom of information act that would be brought in by a Conservative government.

He also outlined our policy to assist small business, which is the backbone of our economic system, and to approve income tax to a limit of \$5,000 per year to encourage Canadians to invest in Canadian small business. In view of the fact that small business activity is the backbone of the Canadian economy, providing at least 60 per cent of the job opportunities in the nation and contributing a huge slice of the tax revenue to the public coffers, and in view of the contribution that has been made by the small business sector of our country, I believe this government ought to take the challenge more realistically and come up with something that will be of advantage and benefit to those who are struggling to keep their operations going, sometimes having to work double shifts themselves in order to meet demands made upon them by governments in the way of statements, records, reports and so on. There ought to be some realistic programs outlined which will bring some assistance to these hard-pressed businessmen who are struggling to make a go of it in Canada.

These are good policies and a few of them have been outlined here this afternoon. They are economically sound and are needed to put this country back on the road to recovery. Again I suggest that the only solution is an election. This will decide how many of those wonderful people from the other side will be back here. I think a lot of them will run but will not be back. We will miss them, sure, but there will be others who will take their place, who will be able to contribute in a superior manner to the debates and discussions that go on in this place, and make their contributions to the preparation of policies that will be of tremendous value and importance to the economy of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, on this quiet Friday afternoon I would like to comment briefly on the speech made Monday night by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) when he introduced the new budget. While I was listening to him, I got the impression that he was a member of a new government because, at the beginning of his speech, he was more or less condemning his predecessor's policy. Is not that playing fair? He said that our gross national product has gone down from 5 per cent in 1976 to 2.6 per cent in 1977. It is a fact everybody is aware of, but to recognize it in his speech, particularly in his first real budget speech takes, I think, a lot of courage.

He also said that the number of unemployed young people has increased. We now have over one million unemployed in Canada. We should not be proud of that. It is a crying shame to have so many healthy people without work. There is a saying that applies here: idleness is the mother of all vices. No wonder delinquency is on the rise in Canada. An able-bodied