

government spending, how we would reduce the size of government and how we would live more within our means.

I would like to discuss some of the votes we are considering today. First, I would refer to Vote No. 5 under Energy, Mines and Resources which calls for a 27.5 per cent increase for that department. An increase such as that cannot be considered at all as restraint. It is particularly unacceptable for that department to ask for an increase in spending when it is the one that is supposed to be responsible for optimal federal energy policy strategies with due regard to their economic, social, regional and environmental impact.

Let us review the impact of the energy policy. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is the department which introduced the national energy policy which resulted in the departure of 226 oil rigs from the country. So much for the economic impact.

As far as the social impact is concerned, there is a large increase in unemployment directly resulting from the National Energy Program. With respect to the regional impact, there has been more division caused by this energy program between the east and the west which has led to a sharp increase in the degree of separatist activity in the west. That department now has the gall to ask for a 28 per cent increase in spending for the damage it has done. That increase should be refused and I think the House knows that.

The next votes I would like to refer to are Vote No. 10 and Vote No. 20 under the Department of Finance for the Inspector General of Banks and the Department of Insurance. We are in opposition to these requests because we want to criticize the minister responsible for not accepting his responsibility to control those two departments. Those departments are to be the watchdogs of the insurance and banking industry. You are signalling me, Mr. Speaker; I thought I had five more minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has 20 minutes. His speech commenced at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. Wilson: I will quickly move along then. I wanted to refer to a number of votes but since I misjudged my time let me say that there is one particular request which we feel it is very important to stop. It is the increase in spending requested by the Canadian Unity Information Office. There has been a total misuse of that office. It is clearly political and partisan promotion of the government and it should be ceased. It is totally out of keeping with the requirements and the original objectives of that office.

In closing, let me make one observation. During the 1960s we judged the performance of this country against the huge potential which existed for us. In the 1970s, as our performance began to slip we started to judge ourselves against the performance of other summit nations. Now in the 1980s, when our performance has slipped to the rock-bottom of those countries, those countries are being blamed for the problems which exist in our country.

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Surely we must go back to the guidelines of the 1960s and judge ourselves against our huge potential. That is what we are attempting to do in our party today by submitting these alternative policies. We urge the government to embrace these policies in a manner which can bring us back to the spirit of the 1960s where we can judge ourselves against that huge potential which we all know is there.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I must admit I was not too surprised at the Opposition Leader's speech, because after all, we are used to his way of analysing the facts and to the solutions he tends to suggest. However, I was very disappointed in the comments made by the member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson), because he usually seems to have a more logical turn of mind and to be more realistic in the kind of solutions he proposes. If he reads what he just said in the House, he would realize that he recited three disappointing verses which merely repeated his leader's refrain. I was particularly surprised at his comments in referring to the votes in the Estimates for the Office of the Inspector General of Banks and the Department of Insurance. It is quite obvious that these two agencies are government watchdogs of the industries they are supposed to regulate, and I am sure that the hon. member, following the testimony given before the standing committee by representatives of the Office of the Inspector General of Banks and the Department of Insurance, will agree that they are indeed the watchdogs of this kind of institution, and that in the last few years a number of factors relating to the Bank Act review, as far as banking institutions are concerned, and to the Department of Insurance, have provided ample justification for the additional funds being requested for these two agencies.

● (1710)

The hon. member alluded to a rather special situation in Quebec, and I must say that his analysis is quite astonishing, because he is making it appear that the federal government actually wants the situation in Quebec to be worse than in other provinces. If Canada's general economic situation is suffering the adverse effects of its dependence on other economies, the hon. member should pursue this line of reasoning and try to explain why certain sectors of Quebec's economy are being more severely affected and thus making that economy particularly vulnerable.

The Leader of the Opposition has told us that he realizes economic trends cannot be turned around overnight. He also said that blaming others will not solve our problems, and his solution was to point out that the basic cause of our problems is the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) last November, in addition to the National Energy Program presented by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and finally, he asked for changes in the Foreign Investment Review Agency. Throughout his speech, not once did he mention the basic cause of the uncertainty and