

Supply

here. That new budget should reject the idea that the only purpose of tax policy is to enrich the federal government. It should accept the idea that tax policy can create growth, investment and hundreds of thousands of jobs in Canada.

Second, the government must recognize that the National Energy Program has absolutely destroyed confidence in the Canadian energy sector as a safe place for private citizens to invest.

An hon. Member: Nonsense.

Mr. Clark: An hon. member says nonsense. Would he identify himself? They do not identify themselves because anyone who knows anything about what is happening in Canada will know that no one with a nickel to invest in the Canadian private energy industry would do so unless they had an iron-clad guarantee that is safer than the iron-clad guarantees that the minister said he had from the American government.

[*Translation*]

Once again, we are hearing from a member from Quebec. I hope that next time, perhaps today, he will speak to defend his fellow citizens and not to defend the policies that have caused them to lose their jobs.

[*English*]

One of the dramatic facts about the energy industry was that our Canadian energy industry grew and was becoming increasingly a Canadian-controlled industry due to the initiative of individual Canadians. That must be the tone of a new energy program. If that is the tone, the purpose of the energy program must be to find energy for Canada and not simply to find tax revenues for the government in Ottawa.

Third, the review of the activities of the Foreign Investment Review Agency which began during my government should be continued in order to reduce uncertainties, to target on the major investments which might cause real problems of Canadian control and to reduce the time lost to bureaucracy. We need both Canadian control and Canadian jobs. The reform of FIRA can give us both.

Fourth, the restraint side of economic policies must be pursued by this whole Parliament. We can all enumerate individual examples of government waste, whether it is three JetStars flying to Winnipeg because the ministers do not like to talk to one another or whether it is the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on Liberal Party propaganda in the name of government advertising. However, there needs to be a much more thorough examination of expenditures by this whole Parliament.

The other day my colleague for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) proposed a motion under Standing Order 43. He asked that the government set up a special committee of the House to examine such measures in the estimates that might be reduced or eliminated, and that that special committee be entitled to call witnesses to examine expenditures with a view

to reducing government expenses by 10 per cent. That proposal was rejected by other parties but I believe it merits the most serious consideration.

Finally, we must restore a sense of partnership in this country as the basis for solving our economic problems. I was personally shocked to hear the Prime Minister of Canada declare recently that co-operative federalism is dead. If co-operative federalism is dead, then Canada is dead. The only way this country can function is by bringing its partners together and making them work together. I have personal experience with the possibility of achieving that. The government which I had the honour to lead was bringing Canadians from all backgrounds and groups together in the national economic development conference.

Mr. Collenette: Is that why you lasted nine months?

Mr. Clark: I am asked if that is why the government lasted nine months by the member for York East (Mr. Collenette), who will soon be returning to private practice. The government lasted nine months because the NDP-Liberal coalition voted to bring us down. We will remind Canadians of the reasons that occurred every day between now and the next election.

Mr. Collenette: Absolute incompetence.

Mr. Clark: The hon. member for York East has just described himself as an absolute incompetent and the rest of the House shares in that definition.

The point I am making is that when there is a government in Ottawa that is prepared to exercise leadership to bring people together, that leadership can be exercised and people can be brought together. Because the great majority of Canadians, whether they are provincial Premiers, labour leaders, business leaders or whatever, want this nation to work. They want this fighting to stop; they want this nation to work. If the program that I have outlined is followed, we can bring down interest rates by at least three or four points. We can stimulate production, investment and thousands of Canadian jobs. We can strengthen the Canadian dollar by restoring confidence in the Canadian economy. By demonstrating our seriousness and exercising the restraint that these times require, we can bring down the rate of inflation. That is our challenge and I hope that this Parliament is up to it.

• (1550)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate which has been launched by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) in which he has put forward very important questions concerning interest rates, production, investment, jobs, the Canadian dollar and the rate of inflation. In the brief time at my disposal, I would like to try to deal with some of the questions which have been raised and are of such importance to the Canadian people.