

The Budget—Mr. Champagne (Champlain)

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): I would ask my colleague from Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) to listen closely to what I am going to say. When we see a responsible government which decides to take control of the Canadian economy and to cut its expenditures, over 63 per cent of the deficit reduction being on account of cuts made within the management of the State and not necessarily distributed among taxpayers as a whole as demagogically stated by the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. Mr. Speaker, we have said, and we have the figures to prove it, figures provided by Statistics Canada and the Conference Board, that our Minister of Finance was right to put the Canadian economy on a new course, to restrict Government spending, to sit down with the provinces and consult and co-operate, in order to offer Canadians effective programs at a lower cost than was the case under the Liberals during their last term.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that at this point we can hardly expect the Opposition to support us, because it would have to say that we are an efficient and a responsible Government.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I was listening to the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart), supposedly an ardent defender of the rights of widows and orphans, who was saying that the Progressive Conservative Government had betrayed Canadians who were most in need. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind him of a few points which I am sure will embarrass him. In 1980, Mr. Speaker, in their election literature, the Liberals promised an allowance for widows and widowers between the ages of 60 and 64. It took a Progressive Conservative Government to make it all come true. The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order! The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart), on a point of order.

Mr. Malépart: My point is that the Hon. Member involuntarily misled the House by saying the Liberals promised to do this. That was not what the Liberals had promised. They had promised better things.

● (1740)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order. The Hon. Member will have an opportunity to ask a question or make a comment after the Hon. Member has finished his speech.

[Translation]

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, this is where I realize to what extent he had a poor memory because I took this word for word from the pamphlet of the former Liberal candidate in the riding of Champlain in 1980. It was written word for word. They should consult one another before making statements which mislead the House.

Mr. Speaker, this reminds me of something else, and I see my colleague from Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) who is sitting behind me. When the Montreal East refineries were closed down in 1981, the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie did not even get out of his office. He did not rise a finger to help the Texaco and other refinery workers who lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker, and that is called political immorality. He thought he should stick with his Party instead of helping workers who were having a hard time.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I just cannot understand now he sits in the Opposition, how he can say something which totally contradicts what he used to say when he was sitting on the Government benches. It is as though Liberal Members generally, and the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) in particular, are more anxious to score political points than to protect the rights of workers.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mind your own business!

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I will reply to my colleague the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) that I am minding my own business, because the business of Canadians is my business. And to think that in 1979 and 1980, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals defeated our Government because we wanted to impose an 18 cents tax on a gallon of gas, while later on they had no qualms about increasing the tax by \$1.15 a gallon! Mr. Speaker, when they did that in 1980, they showed a complete lack of political ethics. But they prefer to ignore it, Mr. Speaker.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) told us that a one cent increase in the price of gas was outrageous. I do not have words to express my feelings for the \$1.15 increase which the Liberals themselves had imposed. There is no word to express that. I can only speak of total lack of political morality. That is the kind of things Liberals have shown us over the past four years.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to recall for the benefit of my colleague the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) that the retail price of gas in Montreal in 1984 was 60 cents a liter. Now, it is 50 cents a liter. Two and a half years after we came to power, the price is ten cents lower than what we had inherited from the Liberals. That, Mr. Speaker, is for me a sign that our Government and, above all, our Minister of Finance, is highly responsible towards every Canadian. I hope no Hon. Members opposite will cry over our shoulders, especially not NDP Members, claiming that one cent more will prevent a brother-in-law from visiting his sister-in-law. Those Members, Mr. Speaker, voted along side with the Liberals in 1980, when we were defeated over the 18 cents proposal. They share responsibility with the Liberals for what was done, for all the wrongdoing to the Canadian economy. They are hypocrites, Mr. Speaker.

● (1750)

Mr. Boudria: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.