

Supply

through that caucus; and if he or she cannot get it through the caucus, that particular legislation does not see the light of day. However, if it gets into the House, and we are defeated on a section, or a part of it, it does not result in the fall of the government.

● (2040)

What is mystifying to me is that when the budget is introduced at eight o'clock in the House of Commons on a Thursday night or any other night, it is only at that time that the members of the party in power have the full information as to what is in the budget, yet we are expected to support that budget. When we find that we cannot, we move as quickly as we can to make whatever changes we are able to bring about. What a foolish way to do something. It is a bill that, if it were defeated in the House, could result in an election.

There should be more input and more discussion among Members of Parliament. I do not care which party is in power, it is not a good system for introducing a budget. I believe it should be changed. That is one point I wanted to make tonight.

The other point is that we are still, and this is an ongoing process, meeting with our constituents, with constituents and representative groups in Ottawa, in an endeavour to get as much information as we can in order that we can talk in a knowledgeable way about the panoply of issues covered in this budget. That is a good and appropriate process.

I believe we would do a better job if there were a better way of introducing a budget so that when it comes into the House, if it does not have unanimous approval, at least we could debate the issues with some degree of knowledge or information and with some degree of dedication to a particular process.

I know that others want to speak. I understand the bells will ring in about an hour, so I will leave it at that. Maybe the member who has been shouting will make a speech and tell us how great this budget is.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make, and first of all, I want to tell the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) that I was very interested in what he had to say. I have the impression that his cabinet experience has been beneficial. This evening he has been giving us advice on how to present budgets, and I feel he would have no trouble stepping into the shoes of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). We would certainly have no objection.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments. A lot of statistics have been quoted on both sides of the House, but the fact remains that this afternoon the Minister of Finance solemnly stated that the situation was very serious. He did not, of course, go on to wonder who was responsible. Perhaps the Canadian people and perhaps the House should try to find out who is to blame for this disaster. And indeed it is one. We have

heard thousands of Canadians and hundreds of organizations discuss the absolutely pitiful performance of this government with respect to the economy. Again, we are being told about long-term projections. We are being told about government proposals and commitments, which is an attempt to have us believe they are willing to clean up their act which, to my knowledge, they have not done for 15 years.

How do they expect the Canadian people to believe projections which for 15 years have proved to be utterly wrong? And the Minister of Finance is talking about tax rebates as if he had managed to find some nice presents for Canadian taxpayers, but not a word about indirect taxes and increased energy costs which are making all these rebates cost so much more. In any case, the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Bussièrès) may have had the audacity to say that the member speaking to you now does not know what he is talking about, but at least we do not indulge in hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. Hypocrisy is not on this side of the House. I feel this government should be made to show its true colours and that its actions should be made clear to all Canadians. At a time like this, Canadians are beginning to realize the kind of hypocritical policies this government has been churning out for 15 years, Mr. Speaker. There is a saying: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, and Canadians have just about had enough. We are aware of this, Mr. Speaker, in my own riding as well as anywhere else in Canada. In my own province, the economy's performance has been pitiful during the 15 years this government has been in power, and the majority of government members are well aware of this. They feel uncomfortable and I would say depressed when faced with questions put to them by certain reporters. Last night, Mr. Speaker, I saw four Quebec Liberal members on television who had no idea what the solution should be.

What suggestion could they make to the House of Commons to get Canada clear of this fix, of this disaster of this abyss in which the government has hurled us? I will not mention any Liberal members this evening. I will come back to that later. These Liberals have been most outspoken with me. I wish to point it out to the Minister of State for Finance that Quebecers are concerned. They are dissatisfied with the behaviour of the Minister of Finance and would have paid a high price to have him stay in Toronto another three months or even another three years. Liberal members do not hesitate to say that they are unhappy about their present situation. They are unable to answer the questions asked by their constituents. What will the government do? We do no longer know. The government is exhausted, empty and devoid of ideas. This government is asking Canadians to remain confident. No way, Mr. Speaker, since more especially during the past two years this government has shown gross carelessness in the economic field. During the past two years, this government has been playing petty politics in its dealings with the provinces, especially in the field of energy.