

*The Budget—Mr. La Salle*

to date, has dared use words likely to provoke division among Canadians and create a truly explosive social climate.

But the worst, Mr. Speaker, is not that the right hon. Prime Minister should have made such unworthy remarks. Today we know that he is quite capable of doing anything at all to save his bacon. The worst is that there should have been Liberals to applaud, to support those unbecoming and unfortunate calls. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I heard several speeches and I should like to demonstrate the lack of trust in the government that has grown in this country. When the right hon. Prime Minister visited Ontario last Sunday, he went as far as to say that if the country were to have a Progressive Conservative government it would separate. I refuse to accept such a statement, Mr. Speaker. Let us remember the story of the three wisemen.

I feel it is important to recall the time when the right hon. Prime Minister, accompanied by his two attendants, came to Ottawa and decided to sink into the Liberal party. Of course, the Liberals of the day did not see them as their friends and especially not as their counsellors. Of the three wisemen, you will recognize with me, Mr. Speaker, that two have chosen fairer climes. As for the third, I think in fact he is faring about as well as the Canadian dollar. But when we look at the background of the right hon. Prime Minister, at the bed-fellows he had at the time, it is not surprising to see the type of politics we have had in the last ten years and why a lack of trust has settled in the land.

He dared claim that a Progressive Conservative government could lead to the separation of the country when he is fully aware, and all hon. members opposite know that, that the situation began to deteriorate in the last ten years, under his administration. Should I recall the fraternity which existed between the two founding peoples, between the two largest groups in Canada, during the centenary of Confederation? What happened in the last ten years? There was a lack of economic policies which increased social problems all over the country, and the Prime Minister travelled across the land making people believe that he had the whole situation in Quebec under control. He accused the mass media of making false statements whereas he alone described accurately and exactly the situation in Quebec. And we wonder today why so many Quebeckers show a lack of trust and even a lack of interest in our federal system. I should perhaps remind hon. members opposite, who have shared the same experiences, that we have witnessed many betrayals on the part of this government and of those members who came here to save the country ten years ago. In view of this terrible political and economic fiasco, we certainly cannot agree hastily to support this budget without making appropriate comments.

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I would like to remind those who state that the government has managed the affairs of Canada well and who wonder about

[Mr. : Mr. S.]

the indifference of Quebeckers and the objective that many of them have, that what has brought about this lack of trust and this rejection of federalism in the province of Quebec is the attitude of this government. For instance, the conflict over the French language in air traffic certainly did nothing to gain the confidence of Quebeckers even though the department involved was headed by a Quebecker, and we should perhaps ask some questions to the then minister of transport who was well aware of the situation in Quebec and who has now gone to rest in the Senate. We could also talk about the Prime Minister. Who is the cause of this lack of trust? This same Prime Minister who had as his main objective bilingualism throughout the country. He had promised a bonus to those who could work in both official languages, and in his cutbacks last summer, without any prior consultation, he boldly took back this bonus and reneged on his promise. If such an action is not liable to create a lack of trust, a lack of confidence and a lack of credibility for these people, I wonder what is.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member for Montmorency (Mr. Duclos) who, with great subtlety, wanted to say to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) that he was greatly disappointed that the federal government had broken its agreement with the government of Quebec. The hon. member for Montmorency was very careful about what he said, but I could see that he was very disappointed and that he disagreed in principle with the minister. The federal government had signed an agreement with a provincial government and it broke this agreement in this budget without any prior negotiation. Not one member on the other side can suggest the opposite. Few people complain about that. So far, so good. Recently the minister told me the closing down of the Laprade site was in the interest of Quebec consumers. If such was the case, Mr. Speaker, how come twelve months ago this government took the lead and invited the Quebec government to start such a huge project? This proves no sufficient revenues had been collected, which points to utter incompetence.

That kind of decision can only worsen the situation as viewed from the province of Quebec. These are decisions that hurt. Of course the Quebec government recently published data proving fiscal restraint was costing Quebec 18,000 jobs. I put the question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien). I asked him whether he had made projections, assessments before announcing those cuts. The minister never answered. He suggested he wanted to put the country's finances into better shape, but he could not prove data published by the Quebec government were inaccurate. The Minister for Federal-Provincial Relations (Mr. Lalonde), who is in the habit of announcing the big bad wolf is coming, had no hesitation in suggesting those data were baseless. Of course this is no proof, and it can hardly help the government regain credibility and public confidence.