

right to refuse to face our responsibilities, and that is what we did.

An hon. Member: The people have spoken.

Mr. La Salle: During the election campaign, Mr. Speaker, this government showed unprecedented hypocrisy, bordering on dishonesty. First, they condemned our position on the gas price increase. There is nobody opposite suggesting now that the price of gas will not go up. But they did not talk much about it. They did not talk about it as long as possible, and they said we were wrong. Of course, for the everyday man, an increase of 18 cents is a lot. But those Liberals opposite knew full well that has been necessary for the past three and a half years if we were serious about self-sufficiency.

When we were talking about self-sufficiency, it was a way of going and getting the revenues where we had to go and get them because we did not want through a general taxation formula to tax those who do not have a car, a poor lady who would have had to pay taxes to help those who use a car. We thought that was an unpopular, but fair, and particularly necessary measure in view of the unprecedented spending and deficit we had. Our budget, I want to remind you, Mr. Speaker, included in addition to those measures that were necessary, the assurance that our budget deficit would be reduced over three to five years, and that was interesting and important for businessmen. Indeed, businessmen did not blame us on the proposals we had already made public. But in spite of the increase in expenditures that was turning out to be ridiculous as the result of the policies being carried out by the present government, they wanted to go ahead with things like a second rail line in western Canada, a second phase at Mirabel which is currently in the red. Of course, it was tempting for older people to have been offered the small amount of \$35, which adds up to approximately \$400 or \$450 million, I think. We could have promised \$50, Mr. Speaker. We had already considered the whole issue. The then minister of national health and welfare (Mr. Crombie) did a thorough analysis of the situation in order to increase the amount and give elderly people a decent income while managing to keep within the limits of the economic envelope and avoiding a larger budgetary deficit. That is the difference.

But no, the Liberals told the public that we were wrong and that the government was still in a good borrowing position. Today the parliamentary secretary points out that things are getting more difficult to manage because it will cost us nearly \$11 billion to service the debt this year. That is the situation we are in now. That is \$11 billion spent in a very negative way; there is no doubt about it. Think of all the things Canada could do had the government not sunk us so deep into debt, Mr. Speaker. But Canadians will have to realize that time has come to restrict government spending and put the economy back on its feet, and the sooner, the better.

Borrowing Authority Act

Will Canadians be spared the increase in the price of oil? I ask the question of our friends on the other side.

An hon. Member: No tax.

Mr. La Salle: No tax. They will pay the price through their income tax, then. It is only a different formula. How much will Canadians have to pay for this enduring mismanagement? Of course, my friends opposite remain silent.

As usual they will be party to such a legislation which will compel Canadians to pay more for servicing an enormous debt. But that is not new, and the people will wake up.

An hon. Member: There is no need to shout so loud, the people have heard you!

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, the people cannot maintain in power for many more years representatives who demonstrate such irresponsibility and such incompetence. That is impossible, Mr. Speaker. And I am sure that the time will come when Canadians will realize what sort of treason they fell victims to during the last election campaign.

An hon. Member: Vox populi—

Mr. La Salle: It is perhaps because we have been more honest than our hon. friends opposite, Mr. Speaker, and it is not easy for anybody involved in politics to be honest.

An hon. Member: That is why you are still in the opposition.

Mr. La Salle: My hon. friends opposite are not aware of that. It is not easy to show enough courage.

Indeed, during the last election campaign, I saw Liberals behave like wolves in my constituency—and I said so not such a long time ago—roaming everywhere to bother elderly people and get then all worked up about the \$35. They were telling them if you vote for the Liberals, you will get \$35 a month, but if you don't you may not get it. They went so far as to make Quebeckers believe they would lose their family allowances and might have their old age security pension reduced. That is how they campaigned—

An hon. Member: Louder!

An hon. Member: Why did you support those \$35 earlier, then?

Mr. La Salle: In my constituency they did not vote for that, they did not vote for you. That I want to point out.

Mr. Speaker, here we are today after this hypocritical campaign—and the word is not too strong—facing a Minister of Finance who refuses to bring down his budget to tell us what he intends to do with these \$12 billion. Moreover, these gentlemen are so inconsistent that they think we will bend to