

Supply

out for an emergency program in both these areas? Government members should stop accusing the province of Quebec, or the American government, but have a good look at themselves, Mr. Speaker, and ask what we are doing for this country. This government which enjoyed the confidence of the people for years does no longer deserve it, Mr. Speaker, and it can be felt in the ridings. It is true that my own province is deeply affected as the result of the deplorable performance of the federal government, but my own province is still more affected by a recession for which the government has to accept responsibility.

● (1550)

Two years ago, the Liberals were returned to power. Let my Liberal colleagues tell me at what point during the election campaign they warned the electorate that they would increase fourfold the 18-cent tax which we had proposed. Let them tell me, Mr. Speaker, at what point during the election campaign they warned the voters in Quebec and elsewhere that they would increase 120 per cent the price of fuel oil. Let them tell me, Mr. Speaker, at what point they warned Canadians that they would let the construction industry die as they are doing now. Let them tell me, Mr. Speaker, at what point they warned Canadians that they would refuse to do anything for renters. Let them tell me, Mr. Speaker, at what point they warned that they would torpedo our tax credit scheme which was intended to help home owners keep their houses. When did they warn the Canadian people that they would fight inflation on the backs of the unemployed? Never, Mr. Speaker, did they tell the workers in the traditional industries, the ailing industries in Quebec, that they would have to accept early retirement plans and job training programs because the federal government has clearly demonstrated its determination to ignore the traditional industries?

We receive representations from the shoe and textile industries. I know that the ridings of many hon. members on the government side are very severely affected by the government's carelessness and nearsightedness. They did not say anything about that two years ago. They did not warn the electorate of the decisions this government is making on a day to day basis. The members of this government, in my opinion, are all party to a national treason. And Quebecers who are watching us today are anxious to see how their elected representatives, some six dozens of them, will behave. They are anxious to see whether the opinion of the ten dissenting members, including two ministers, is shared by the majority of the Quebec Liberal caucus, and in case it is, how they will vote tonight considering the lack of response from the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove), who is in charge of the very sensitive area of housing, as well as the lack of response from the Minister of Employment and Immigration, to their recommendation? Surely, deeds speak louder than words. To represent our fellow citizens and convey their real hopes and wishes to Parliament, in my opinion, is a noble and respectable occupation. How

could they claim that they respect this occupation and deserve the confidence their constituents have vested in them if these hon. members do not have the guts to stand behind their signatures?

An hon. Member: Beware of your high blood pressure!

Mr. La Salle: My blood pressure is just fine, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that these hon. members should examine their conscience this afternoon, taking into account the fact that they have an obligation to give the Canadian people an opportunity to elect a party which would be concerned with the interests of all parts of Canada.

I have spoken of national treason, Mr. Speaker. After the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) had been brought down, it became clear that in Quebec, as elsewhere, voters had had enough, and could not put up with those measures which are repressive for and condemned by all categories of people and in every field of endeavour in Quebec and everywhere in our Canadian society. My colleagues from Quebec who are fooling around across the way know that perfectly well.

How is it then that only ten of them signed that letter when I know at least 50 felt like doing so? I appeal to their conscience. I appeal to the sense of respect they should have for their signature, and on behalf of millions of Quebecers, Mr. Speaker, I plead with them to meet the expectations and aspirations of their own constituents. How does one explain, Mr. Speaker, that all of a sudden those members should decide to write an open letter to their Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), if not because of the pressures and the helplessness they felt in their ridings?

A while ago, the hon. member for Montreal-Mercier delivered a gracious message and probably spoke on behalf of the ten, trying to justify what they will do this evening, saying she has never condemned the MacEachen budget. What a cop-out, Mr. Speaker! This is not the first time I have seen it either. But what a great disappointment for the Quebecers who thought that surely at some point some group would have the courage to bring the Minister of Finance back to his senses, and also bring the government to be more respectful of the needs of Canada as a whole, and especially Quebec, since there are 74 members sitting opposite whose role is extremely important. It seems increasingly possible, as I speak to you, that Quebecers will once more be disappointed because those members did not have the courage to stick it out to the end, and their last stand will be seen in Quebec as a pitiful performance. And the leader of the rebels, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), I have yet to see in the House today. I wonder if she will show up here tonight after the warning the Prime Minister gave her. The hon. member for Montreal-Mercier did not tell us everything when she said she willingly submitted to the invitation of the chairman of the caucus who chided her, and that of the Prime Minister who