

The Budget—Mr. Trudeau

were to be defeated and finally, summer came, still no elections.

Then summer came and with the end of summer, the rail strike, the return of Parliament, inflation. There, it was finished, Mr. Speaker. Things had come to an end, Parliament was going to fall on the inflation issue.

One may recall that that crisis was also overcome, and that the government survived. But there was the oil situation, war in the Middle East and prices skyrocketing at a bewildering rate. Oil was to be the question on which the government would not be able to stand any more. The oil problem was to mark the end of the government.

In December, Mr. Speaker, the government introduced an energy policy which was endorsed not only by members in this House but by the country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with a detailed account of the days when the life of my government was threatened. Then we had a new session, a new Speech from the Throne, and budget estimates. In March, we voted on the Veterans' Land Act, and last week, we had an act on profiteering practices.

At last, we have come to it, Mr. Speaker, again, we are told that the government will fall, that a general election is a settled matter once and for all.

May I be allowed, Mr. Speaker, after so many false alarms, to show some skepticism. May I be allowed to wait until tomorrow evening to see whether members opposite are not going to hedge once more in order to extend the life of this government. May I be allowed to wait until then to summon the troops to victory.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I want to insist in case they would finally have a reason to cry wolf 5, 10, 15 times, should their threats so often repeated prove at last justified for once and should we indeed have a general election. I would like to tell the House and the whole country that it will be them, hon. members opposite, not the Liberals or the Social Crediters who will have called for a general election after all these threats and all these subterfuges.

● (1720)

[English]

Why am I reciting this series of threats and events which were always going to weigh in on us to provoke a general election? Why? Because I want to remind this House that the attitude of this government after the election of October 1972 was one of accepting the verdict of the electorate. It was one of saying to the people of Canada "Sure, you did not give us as many members as we hoped to have. Sure, we would have liked to have a majority government, but we know we did some things wrong. We know you were telling us by voting against many of our members that you wanted to change some things." That has been the attitude of the government.

We have taken the attitude that we did not have a majority. We had a plurality. We had an obligation to try to make parliament work, to try to make the voice of the people a significant event in Canadian electoral history. We knew we could not do it alone. We knew that, in some cases, we would have to depend on the Creditistes; in other cases, the NDP; and, in other cases the Conservative

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party, to support our proposals and policies. We knew that because of that we would have to accept amendments to certain of our policies and legislation. We said there would be many cases where certain government proposals would not be deemed to go to the roots of our policy and we would accept defeats on them. We said that the opposition always had opportunities, if they wanted, through supply days and non-confidence motions to provoke a general election. However, in the meantime we were dedicated to make this parliament work for the good of the people.

I accept the attitude of the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette) who said he saw it as the duty of his party, not to destroy the government day by day, but to make sure the government brought in amendments, changes or concessions to its policy which in its view would be for the good of the people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: They voted against the government every time. They knew the government would not fall.

Mr. Trudeau: The leader of the New Democratic Party says they voted against the government every time. Quite a few times the New Democratic Party voted for the government.

Mr. Lewis: That's right.

Mr. Trudeau: I think somewhere around 1962-63, the NDP decided that in a minority parliament it might be able to play a role. I remember the speeches made by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). I was sometimes in the audience when they were speaking.

An hon. Member: And once on the platform.

Mr. Trudeau: I was wise enough in those days never to take a membership in that party because I saw very soon how doctrinaire they were.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I saw in those days that the so-called consciences of the Canadian people were prepared in Quebec to flirt with anyone, with separatism, with nationalism—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Had I had a membership in the NDP, which I never had—I don't know what light was shining on me then—I would have done like Eugene Forsey, now Senator Forsey. I would have torn up my membership card when they adopted a two-nation policy.

[Editor's Note: At this point there was a disturbance in the gallery.]

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if I am going to have trouble with the people in the gallery, I think I had better go back to reading my notes.