

Oral Questions

himself. The question is whether you can have a political settlement without a democratic election. I think the answer is that that is the best course, if it is possible.

What distresses me in the apparent attitude of the Leader of the New Democratic Party is that he does not put the accent on the election, he puts the accent on a negotiated settlement, as if somebody should form the government as a result of some kind of coalition.

We say that if an election is possible, and we know that it was possible even in Zimbabwe, and under very difficult circumstances, we hope it would be possible in El Salvador. We believe our government is on the right course in encouraging the parties in the field to negotiate the conditions whereby that election could be a fair and open one.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVIL ORDER

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I would first point out to the Prime Minister that the legal adviser to the Archbishop in San Salvador, who did the verification of the terrorist killings under his direction, said to me that 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the terrorist killings are being done by the security forces. The evidence is clear that they are being done overwhelmingly by one side. I do not deny that some are being done by the other side, but it is the policy of the security forces to carry them out. It is not the policy of the Front.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: I say to the Conservative members to my right—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should remember that he must ask questions of members on the government side.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, considering that the bar association in El Salvador, as well as virtually every other interested group of citizens, has said that under present circumstances elections would be a charade because of the degree of terrorism, would the Prime Minister not agree that, as a pre-condition for elections, which we all favour, what must be established first is a minimum degree of civil order? Since the Front has offered to have unconditional negotiations to bring this about, would the hon. gentleman also not agree that the first priority ought to be the establishment of peace, which should then be followed by elections?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member assures us that terrorism is not the policy of the Front. I think we can make the assurance that terrorism is not the policy of the Duarte government.

An hon. Member: It is so.

Mr. Trudeau: I regret to say that if hon. members opposite say that, then they are not well informed. Mr. Duarte is not in control of some of his extremists any more than the Front is in control of some of its extremists. I think it would be fairer to say that both sides want to get rid of terrorism rather than to say that only one side condemns it. Both sides condemn it. But both sides have extremist elements which do practise terrorism.

The hon. member says that the bar association has stated that under present circumstances—if I noted his words well—elections would be a charade. We agree with that, and President Duarte agrees with that, which is why he is not proposing elections “under present circumstances”. He is proposing that the elections be prepared by rules and meetings which would permit them to be held fairly.

I do not think there is a great difference between the position of the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the position of the government. The Leader of the New Democratic Party says he wants to see elections held one day, so does Duarte, and so does this government.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party shakes his head that he does not want that. I do not know if I misunderstood him. I understood him to say that he wanted to see elections held.

Mr. Broadbent: Yes.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I do not think the members of the New Democratic Party are very serious.

● (1430)

ROLE OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I frankly do not believe the Prime Minister believes what he has just been saying about the position of the government in El Salvador. The position of the government in El Salvador is, indeed, to proceed with elections now. The government has set the date within the year, and it is that date which the bar association, in effect, has said is ridiculous.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, considering that before elections were feasible in Zimbabwe it required the outside pressure of dozens of states to make that a possibility, does he not think the Government of Canada should join in a similar kind of outside pressure to create peaceful conditions before elections take place in El Salvador? Second, I would like to ask him, since there is obviously some difference of views about what is taking place in that part of the world, will the Prime Minister agree to send his Secretary of State for External Affairs, along with representatives of all the parties in the House of Commons, to make an on the site inspection in El Salvador and Central America itself, so that they can bring back the truth to the people of Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not think I can or should make that undertaking