

Supply

● (1740)

What we need in this country, Mr. Speaker, is a general election. Canadians from coast to coast, in every region, every city, every small town, have lost confidence in the Government of Canada. It is worn out, tired, it has been here four years and that is four years too long. Canadian tradition requires an election this year, but we have a Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), a Liberal caucus and a Cabinet who will resist that and try to tell us that it is Canadian tradition for an election to be held every five years. Well, it is four years and it is time to go.

In the words of the Liberal Member who spoke last, Mr. Speaker, there is a kind of hysteria out there, a kind of nervousness. You say "nuclear" and people are afraid, in part because it does not matter what the Prime Minister, his Cabinet or Liberal backbenchers say, Canadians do not believe. The information they give could be accurate, and sometimes it is. But the Government has worn out its welcome, and when Canadians do not believe, they do not act in concert and the problems grow.

Whether we talk about the confidence a small businessman in the corner grocery needs, or a corporation president, a general in the Armed Forces or a deputy minister in any Department of Government needs, when you have confidence in the Government of the country that is eroded, you see available energy sapped and talent gone to waste. The way to correct that, Mr. Speaker is through a general election. That is no different from the need for a public inquiry of the whole nuclear energy issue. Through a public inquiry Canadians can review the evidence for themselves. If we were in another area and another place, if we had had decade after decade of leaders we could trust, leaders who spoke the truth and were believable, we might not have the hysteria which exists today. We might not need a public inquiry. But when we are confronted with a government which was elected by telling Canadians that 18 cents a gallon was too large an increase in the price of gasoline, and then gave them a one dollar increase, a government which said in 1974 that wage and price controls are a bad idea and 90 days of controls is a tragedy for the country, and then gave us three years of controls, when we have a Minister responsible for sport who reaches an agreement in December, 1983, and then Ministers are changes and the Cabinet overturns that decision in January, 1984, then we have a Government which is not trusted. Trust is the root cause of our unemployment and of every other problem in this country. We need an election, we need it now, and we need it more than a public inquiry on this issue.

Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the Hon. Member speak. He still has not realized it is 1984, not February, 1980. He is still living in the past and in his short term in Government.

This motion deals with the international aspects regarding the storage and use of uranium and nuclear by-products. Certainly by-products are used in nuclear weapons, and it is this Party which has led the debate in this House against nuclear weapons. The Hon. Member seems ambivalent about a

public inquiry, whether it be a royal commission or a parliamentary committee. If his Party were sincerely concerned about the nuclear industry and an inquiry, at the time it was in power, and had it appointed a royal commission, would he not agree that the royal commission would have continued in existence despite the future of that Government? Is this not a good reason to have a royal commission rather than a parliamentary task force when we are on the eve of an election?

It seems to me the reason we are talking about a royal commission is that it could witness under oath, including witnesses from the AECB and the AECL, government bodies which are secretive. Would the Hon. Member like to comment on the advisability of a parliamentary committee which may not last another year?

Mr. Fisher: Yes or no?

Mr. Hawkes: As quickly and briefly as I can, Mr. Speaker, if the NDP trusts that Government to pick the people to run the inquiry, it is even more naive than I thought.

Mr. Miller: We do not trust this Government much more than we trusted the former Government.

The Hon. Member is still concerned about the defeat of his Government in 1979, not only in the House of Commons but in 1980 at the polls as well. If the Hon. Member is so interested in defending western Canadian rights, why did it take his Party another three years to determine that a leader from western Canada should be replaced by a leader from eastern Canada?

Mr. Hawkes: Time will tell, Mr. Speaker, whether or not we have selected a leader who really believes in the regions of this country. That was and is the most important public policy issue that this country faces. We have had far too many years of centralization, of growth in Crown corporations, far too many years of socialistic principles. We need individual initiative. We need to respect the nature of provincial governments and regional concerns.

I believe we have selected a leader and I believe we had a leader before that and before that and before that who respected all of those concerns each and every time. That is a claim which neither his Party nor the Liberal Party can make.

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in debate on this important issue, one which the NDP feels is long overdue. I am surprised that the members of the Government who have spoken today have really not reflected the seriousness of this question, nor have they shown willingness to open up to public scrutiny the policies of the federal Liberal Government, a Government which has not been forthcoming in terms of opening up the whole question of the nuclear industry in Canada, an industry which has over the years come under much questioning from environmentalists, economists and people involved in the energy field in general. The whole question of the nuclear industry as it relates to the Canadian economy, energy exports, health and safety in the work place, export of nuclear tech-