

Supply

Of course we all agree in this House that Canada is the best country in the world in which to live, but imagine the nerve and the audacity for this government, for that speaker, to take credit for that success of Canada. He knows and the world knows that his party has been out of power for most of the first 92 years of this century. If there is any party that can lay claim to that success it certainly is not the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada—the unmitigated gall to make that kind of claim.

When it comes to unmitigated gall, he knows as well as anyone that Canadians are starving for an election. Every poll shows it. Every piece of mail that I get indicates that. What does the speaker say? What does the government say? They sneer, “oh, well, you will get your election when the time comes and we will decide when the election comes”.

That is the kind of audacity this government has.

Let us talk about the proposition that is before the House, the call for a federal election now. We heard speakers earlier talk about the economy and how it is in tatters. We have heard about the unemployment figures. We have heard about the high rate of taxation and so on, but there is something else that has not been touched on in any great length and I want to touch on it. It has to do with Canadians feeling despair that they are losing control. They are losing their independence. They are losing their autonomy. They are losing their democracy. They are losing it because they know that this government is pushing our economy and our entire country and our democracy into its kind of continentalism.

It is asking Canadians, after this great success the country has had, to surrender Canada to an alien kind of political culture that is across the border. We may have to accept things like no minimum wage, as in the southern United States. Perhaps we would have so-called right to work laws in this country. We may lose our social programs, the kind of experience that is felt every day in the United States. That is what Canadians are concerned about and they have a right to pass judgment on that in a federal election.

My question for the previous speaker is: Does he not have to agree?

• (1540)

Mr. Bird Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite really lack is any sense of vision. The only sense of vision they have is another opportunity to go to the polls in the hope that they might win an election.

I was disappointed in the member for Broadview—Greenwood, for whom I have the utmost respect. Even he was speaking of despair and misery and contributing to the malaise that is gripping this country at this time. We are supposed to be leaders. We are supposed to have a sense of vision. We are supposed to have a plan for this country. This government has had a plan for the past eight years. It took over from a Liberal government that left us deeply entrenched in debt, a burden that we must carry on and on and on with compound interest; a government that had taken us to as high as 22.5 per cent in interest rates. It was a government that had spending growing at the rate of 14.6 per cent through most of its mandate; a government that spent and spent and spent with no sense of what it was trying to create and accomplish. It left us bereft financially. It left us bereft constitutionally. Then to have these members of Parliament, in some frivolous degree of self-interest, call for an election in the midst of serious efforts to turn this country around is on the verge of irresponsibility.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member.

The government is forgetting about the disadvantaged people in our community. I am not saying that it does not care. When we were home for the last two weeks, as you have been home, I am sure you have been hearing from the people who are doing well, but you are also hearing from the people who have lost their jobs. Maybe some of them have lost their homes or some of them may even have lost their businesses. I thought it was part of our responsibility as members of Parliament to come back here and figure out ways of advancing debate to try and change that condition in which we have all of these unemployed people and business confidence that is not all that strong.

Earlier, when I gave my remarks, I gave the government full marks for the lower interest rate and the decrease in inflation. It is not all your doing. The people of Canada should get some recognition for that as well. We are saying you ratcheted down inflation enough. People need some help out there. I am not speaking for