

We should be proposing some constructive ways in a day of debate, for example, on how to make the tax system fairer. That seems to me a constructive debate. But you have put forward a debate just to say that if you were sitting over there you would call an election in this situation. You would not call an election. I will tell you if we were sitting over there and given the circumstances, we would not call an election either. You would not call an election. Let us tell the truth here. This party would not call an election if we were sitting at 16 per cent in the polls and we had another year to run in our mandate. Of course we would do the same thing because we control when the election is called. Nobody calls an election when you are down at the bottom. Nobody calls one when you are down. You did not call one until 1979. You waited five years to call it.

• (1710)

There are all sorts of reasons why they should be taken out of office, but constitutionally they control the date of the election. We can have a nice debate here about all the bad things they have done. That is agreed. The people know that. That is why they are at 16 per cent.

I want to get out our position on a fair income tax system. How do we get rid of this bad GST for something that is more progressive, more distributive? That to me is helpful.

I participated in this to point out all the reasons why they would not. I know why they would not and you know why they would not. So there it is.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I thought as we got to the question period maybe we would find out what my hon. friend and former neighbour was really talking about.

Now I can understand that if the NDP were the government it would change the consumption tax or the value added tax into income taxes. I am sure that all Canadians will be waiting with bated breath for that one. We know what kind of income tax we would see to raise the moneys needed. Also that will trickle down to the middle income people who certainly, if they have not had some shocks, would have some with that kind of income tax. I guess we know where my hon. friend and his party are coming from.

Supply

I thought maybe I would take a little different slant than that of my hon. friend from Nickel Belt. Rather than using so much rhetoric maybe we will try to give a little more facts and talk about what the government is doing, the reasons that it must certainly carry on with doing those things and that it is very important to do that over the next remaining part of its mandate.

Over the last 30 years Canada has had significant growth among the G-7 nations. In fact it is one of the fastest growing of the OECD nations. We have enjoyed through the years a very high standard of living in Canada. We have had significant investment growth over the last 30 years and have been one of the highest job creation countries in the OECD. We certainly have had an enviable record.

Our standard of living is noted as being only second to that of the United States. A recent United Nations study puts Canada in over-all quality as a place to live second only to that of Japan. Certainly we have a tremendous country to live in, a good record and a world renowned reputation.

What has gone on in the past is never a total guarantee of what will happen in the future as far as prosperity is concerned. The world is changing in a lot of ways and in some fundamental ways. There are rapid advances in information. Other fundamental technologies have brought about a globalization of economic production. These advances, coupled with liberalized trade and the formulation of regional trading blocs, are changing the ways of doing business pretty dramatically.

We as a country through our departments of industry, science and technology and international trade are constantly working to make ourselves competitive in the kind of change that is going on.

They create real challenges for our Canadian industry. There is no doubt about it. They create new opportunities for those who adapt quickly and are able to build upon their strength in this globalized environment.

Industry, Science and Technology of Canada of course has been designed to help citizens take advantage of these opportunities. Certainly since this department was created in 1989 it has been the flagship of the economic department. Its mission is to advance Canada's international competitiveness, as I said, and its scientific excellence.