

*Supply*

This motion before us today does little more than attempt to add to the spirit of negativism in Canada with its ill-concealed hand-wringing of distress and discouragement. Do you think that Canadians will really believe that an immediate general election will cure our economic problems or will bring resolution to our constitutional deliberations, or will advance the initiatives of the green plan for environmental renewal, or will advance the development of our diversified cultural identity? No. They will see this motion for what it is, a weak and dispirited response by the opposition to all of the great issues of the day for Canada, a statement of ineptitude to effectively deal with those great challenges except by the desolate call of the empty politician with nothing left to offer except "let's call an election and hope for the best".

It is time to stop that negative talk in Canada. We have too much going for us in our future and it is time to move on with vigour and momentum, with confidence and courage. It is time to stop beefing about everything that is wrong with our country. It is time to start bragging about the much larger abundance of what is right with it.

To state it plainly, and hopefully not at the risk of using unparliamentary language, for every Canadian in every corner of this country and for every politician of every party, it is time to change our attitudes. Particularly to those on the opposite benches I would say this: Truly it is time to stop bitching about Canada and time to start boasting about it. The future is ours. Let us seize it.

The enviable position which Canada is developing among the nations of the world is not happening by accident. It is the result of the Canadian population and its government committing to some fundamental principles. They have been instrumental in guiding us to make difficult decisions which have pointed us in sound directions.

First of all, Canadians generally and this government in particular have been willing to face the stark realities of excess and inefficiency from previous administrations and to demonstrate the will to cope with the need for change.

• (1530)

We have accepted the responsibility to find new solutions and we have introduced difficult and sometimes daring measures to create and accomplish them.

The first principle has been to accept our responsibilities and not to hide or run from them, as calling a premature election would be the opposition's way of doing this.

The second principle has been to recognize the lasting truth about democracy. The government must always be of the people, by the people and for the people. The ultimate creation of progress in any society is through the combined efforts of its citizens. To a greater degree than ever before in our history Canada has been governed in close consultation and in continuing communication with its population. That second principle displays the knowledge by this government that it is the role of government to serve the people of Canada and to serve them consistently and well until our mandate to do so has been fulfilled; not as this opposition would have us do, merely to seek re-election when the time is perceived to be right for the opposition.

The third principle, which the previous Liberal government ignored for more than a decade and a half, is that a strong economic foundation is fundamental to the total well-being of any nation. Without economic health and prosperity that will eventually touch the lives of all Canadians it would be impossible to deliver lasting social justice.

Unless our country's economic house is in order we would never be able to sustain its social furnishings. Thus, this government has committed itself to a plan of economic initiatives that is already producing effective results and providing a strong basis of confidence to carry us into the next century. As the opposition well knows, those economic signals will become even stronger as the next federal election draws ever nearer.

The fourth principle is the most important one of all—the determination to keep Canada whole. It is to realize the total power and potential of this country is greater than merely the sum of its parts. It is to ensure our rich diversity is nurtured and maintained. It is to reaffirm that Canadians always come together as one proud and unified country. That principle has been challenged and tested in recent years almost to the