

scale in the way that the Conservative tax policy has been structured.

If the member reads taxation statistics, she will know that the last eight years under Tory rule have been a tremendous boon to those at the high end of the income scale. They have actually had a tax reduction. As a result, the people at the lower and middle class end of the income scale have had to pay for that largesse. So, as we have proposed in this House, we would like to see a mechanism for redistributing the burden.

In her initial presentation the member talked about getting all Canadians to work together. I think the Prime Minister started off on the right track when he talked about a government of national reconciliation. When he was first elected it will be recalled that he brought Bob Hawke, the Prime Minister of Australia, up here. He brought workers and corporate and public representatives to Ottawa for a meeting to find out how the people of Canada in the various sectors could pull together. It collapsed, because the Prime Minister himself did not seem to have a commitment to it.

I recall when we were talking about the problems we had in shipping wheat through west coast ports that were on strike, the Prime Minister stood up and said: "Well, you talk to your friends in labour to see if they can stop the strike". I will tell the hon. member what the problem is. If the government by that kind of statement is admitting it has no friends in labour, then it has no opportunity to set up a government of national consensus. It has no opportunity to get a government of reconciliation that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member's time has expired. Questions and comments have been terminated. On debate the hon. member for Saint-Léonard. I believe you are splitting your time with the hon. member for Nepean.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm that I will share my speaking time with the hon. member for Nepean.

Supply

The subject of debate on this opposition day is the motion of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government is incapable of providing leadership and direction in the economic and social affairs of the nation and has lost the confidence of this House and of the Canadian people and that, therefore, an election should be called forthwith, in accordance with the Canadian custom, practice and tradition of holding a general election at least every four years.

• (1310)

What does this motion say? First of all, it states that in accordance with tradition, an election should be called every four years. In fact the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was inspired by the very motion moved by the present Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, in the House on December 9, 1983. Today, after eight years of government we have every kind of problem you can think of, and the country is in a crisis. Eight or nine years ago, the present Prime Minister believed it was important to have an election every four years and made it quite clear it was a Canadian tradition, and repeated this during the 1988 election campaign.

On October 24, 1992, and I am quoting from an interview with the *Journal de Montréal*, the Prime Minister said: "We are one year away from an election, and we will have time to discuss it". This is one more promise he does not intend to keep. He now believes the government should be able to stay for up to five years. What did the Prime Minister say on December 9, 1983 about governments staying longer than five years? He said: "Sure, some governments might decide to stay for more than four years, but it just means they are tired. It means they are bankrupt". This is what is happening to a government that has lost the confidence of the Canadian people. Not just in one region of this country but in all regions. Just look at the latest polls.

Since I am sharing my speaking time with the hon. member from Nepean, I would like to use the few minutes I have left to talk mostly about my own region, the Montreal region, which is in very bad shape. I remember we used to have a slogan in Montreal: Montreal equals pride, Montreal equals city. Today it is the unemployment capital and the bankruptcy capital. Montreal is no longer Canada's metropolis. Montreal is truly at risk. Since January 1992 we have been suggesting that. The government keeps telling us that the opposi-