

*Supply*Question No. 265—**Mr. Mifflin:**

Has the Department of National Defence given serious consideration to distinguishing rank insignia on naval officers to denote the naval service of Canada as distinct from other marine services in the country?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence):

The Department of National Defence has considered this issue but does not have any immediate plans to change the Canadian Forces rank insignia worn on naval officers' uniforms. The current insignia meet the operational needs of the forces.

[*English*]

Mr. James: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—REQUEST FOR GENERAL ELECTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Dingwall (p. 9682).

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, the motion which has been placed before us today by the opposition House leader calls for an immediate federal general election. I believe he feels that he and his colleagues perceive such an action to be the best way to serve their interests disguised in the venue as the best way, as he says, of serving the interests of Canada.

In some respects I am tempted to agree with him because an election would force the opposition to face the realities which are confronting Canada today and to truly focus on the best interests of Canadians. Rather, however, I believe this motion really focuses on their own perception of their own best interests, prompted solely by polls which give them delusions of grandeur. This motion is really not motivated by the best interests of Canadian citizens at all.

• (1520)

It is interesting to see how the political fish rise to the bait, blind to their real responsibilities by the flash of perceived opportunity and perhaps triggered also by just a little touch of fear.

Imagine the hint of butterflies in their bellies when they realize that their own poll standings have peaked and the government ratings, as low as they have been, have actually commenced to turn? What noble purposes are inspired when we hear the opposition say to themselves: "We had better act now, the news is starting to get good and the government is starting to come on strong".

In the perceived best interests to themselves, and really with no regard to the interests of Canadians at all, the opposition would like to have a federal election before the sands of time run out on them for the third consecutive time.

As I say, I can almost agree with my hon. friend from Cape Breton that a general election should soon be called, except that it would not be in the best interests of Canadians at all, not just yet. A better time will come for the only real poll that counts and it will come after this government has fulfilled its responsibilities in the fashion for which we were elected only three and a half years ago.

But first we must finish our task of serving Canadians and then, in due course, a federal general election will follow. When it comes, there will be a finished and lasting foundation of real service on which to launch it. There will be a clear and compelling vision of the future and the promised potential of that future with which to lead it.

So please mark those words carefully. When that election comes it will not be one designed to serve political purposes for political parties, as this frivolous motion does; rather, it will be one designed solely to serve the people of Canada and to help lead them to their potential. I use the word frivolous advisedly because even the members who advanced this motion know full well that Canada is currently coping with critical concerns that an election would not cure, at least not right now.

What they also know and what Canadian citizens are slowly but surely coming to realize is that this government is addressing those concerns in comprehensive and constructive ways, and cures for them are coming closer