

Supply

I hear the hon. member talk about a rational approach. There is no rational approach. He talks about a new partnership. There is no new partnership. The people of this country are angry at this government. There is not a sense of co-operation and working together because the people do not trust this government and therefore we should have an election and at least get a government the people of this country have some confidence in.

[Translation]

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member hit the nail on the head. He says we have no leadership and no long-term vision, but that it is all because of the tax system we have had in this country for x number of years, and that it was the previous government's fault. In the small folder that came with *The Budget Papers*, it said that in 1984 we had a national debt, and that the debt had doubled because of the interest we had to pay on the debt and because we had to borrow money every year to pay off the debt. Meanwhile, there are a number of priorities we will have to deal with, and that is something we cannot avoid. We can no longer live on credit, travel now and pay later, which is what we have been doing for the past 25 years.

• (1640)

When they say we have no long-term vision, no long-term policy and no leadership, I find that difficult to believe. Earlier I gave a few examples of partnership. What was done, the people did themselves. These initiatives were taken by groups, by native people, by women, and together with the government they were able to develop those programs.

Do not tell me we have no leadership, that the Prime Minister has no leadership, that our party has no leadership, and that people want a general election. Earlier I heard a member say that we were not listening to what Canadians were saying about unemployment. We are listening. We are just as smart as anybody else and we are listening to what people are telling us: Do not put the Liberals back in power for the next 25 years, because we will be in even deeper trouble.

[English]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record a few thoughts about the motion that is brought forward by my colleagues on the right, the Liberal Party. This motion reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the interests of Canadians would be best served by an immediate federal general election.

They only put that forward because they think they can win it. They said some very scathing things about a government that is hanging on the ropes. They want to deliver the knuckle punch. They want to give them the right hook. We want to give them the left hook.

I have seen this scenario and you can make all sorts of arguments depending on which side of the House you sit on. I remember the period of 1974-79. We were demanding then but Pierre Trudeau took the government in that period right down to the five years.

Mr. de Jong: Five years?

Mr. Rodriguez: Five years, from May 1974 to May 1979. Why did he not call an election? He had lost the confidence of the people. You could not sell him in the country. Why? I want to remind my friends to the right, the Liberal Party, that they must remember their history because it is the government that determines when the election is going to be called. It does not call an election when it thinks it cannot win a majority government. They know full well they would not call it when they were 39, 38, 37 and 40 per cent throughout 1979 leading up to the election. They knew that at 40 per cent or at 39 per cent they could not win a majority.

Let us cut all the jiggery-pokery and the bamboozling around and just lay the cards on the table.

The question I want to ask and that I want to debate is: Why would this government, the Tories, call an election now? The question is: Why does it not call an election? I have some thoughts on the matter and I want to share them with my colleagues here.

It is not going to call an election. Remember in our system it is the government, it is the Prime Minister who goes over for tea with the Governor General and decides when we are all going to start knocking on doors or whatever we do to get elected here.