

to the point of disaster, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Ellis):

That the Prime Minister who, because he is the Prime Minister, scares the hell out of the people, immediately call a general election so Canadians, who are obviously ready and willing to elect a new and capable government, will have no reason to fear the future.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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LOUIS RIEL

PROPOSAL THAT POSTHUMOUS PARDON BE GRANTED—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. Madam Speaker, today Canadians enjoy political freedom which has few parallels anywhere in the world. Indeed, democracy can probably be gauged by the extent to which a nation tolerates dissent. Today we tolerate literally all forms of political dissent, from elected advocates of separatism to others who advocate union with the United States. But surely another measure of political maturity must be the ability of a nation to forgive past transgressions against the authority of the state.

With the benefit of hindsight, Madam Speaker, I and many others in this House believe that the case of Louis Riel, who was elected to the Canadian House of Commons as the hon. member for Provencher, deserves to be reconsidered. For his political leadership of the 1885 rebellion, he was charged with high treason, tried for murder, and hanged despite a jury recommendation for mercy. In retrospect, many historians agree that mistakes were made on both sides and that natural justice for the Métis people has not yet been realized.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly), the hon. member for Cochrane-Superior (Mr. Penner) and, I hope, the entire Progressive Conservative caucus:

That this House grant Louis Riel a posthumous pardon for the crime of high treason.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Oral Questions

FORESTRY

NECESSITY FOR SUPPLEMENTAL JOB-CREATION PROGRAM—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, in view of the government's slow and inadequate response to unemployment in British Columbia's forest sector, in view of the fact that the present B.C.-Canada employment bridging assistance program for forestry workers requires participants to be on unemployment insurance, and in view of the fact that many loggers and millworkers have already exhausted their UIC benefits, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker):

That the government immediately establish a supplemental program to provide jobs for forestry workers who do not qualify for the bridging program.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT WITHDRAW POLICIES

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance I will put my question to the Acting Prime Minister who will be aware, I am sure, that the gross national income of the country dropped in the first quarter, on a seasonally adjusted annual basis, by 8 per cent. That is the second largest percentage decrease since records have been kept. Since the dollar is also in a free fall, will the minister explain why the government does not feel that now is the time for the government to swallow its pride and withdraw those key policies—any key policies—which are causing some reduction in economic growth, some increase in unemployment, such as the energy program, the last budget, and the huge deficit in the federal government budget?

• (1415)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I must agree with my hon. friend that there has been a decline in the first quarter in the real gross national expenditure by 2 per cent. I am informed that on an annualized basis it is 7.8 per cent. That situation is not particular to Canada. I observed this morning that the United States has forecast an annualized decline of 4.3 per cent on the same basis as Canada.

There are a number of good figures in the national accounts that my hon. friend prefers not to talk about, and it is pretty obvious why. For example, the balance of payments on a