

The Address—Mr. Cossitt

thermore, both he and his government have clearly demonstrated how little they are prepared or how little they are able to do anything about the whole situation. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, this country has a Prime Minister who prefers to gaze with no concern at the Canadian scene through the windows of his \$76,000 Cadillac, rather than take some action that would help the disastrous economic shape of Canada. Apparently it is more interesting for him to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayers' money on his office or on 24 Sussex Drive than it is to worry about the elderly of this country who are being forced to exist on grossly inadequate pensions and who, in thousands of cases, have not even got a decent place to live. While the people of Canada see their tax dollars filling Sussex Drive with such things as Hepplewhite consoles, stereo equipment, fancy crystal and even Persian carpets, not one thing has been done by this government to halt or slow down the cost of living that gallops constantly upward, creating an almost impossible situation for those on low and on fixed incomes.

● (1540)

It would be bad enough if we had a government that had tried to deal with the cost of living and had just not succeeded, but we have something far, far worse than that. We have a government that has not even remotely tried to stop this country from moving down the road to economic disaster. Nothing could express the situation more clearly than the lead editorial in the *Toronto Star* of February 19, 1974. This editorial bore the most appropriate heading "Our Helpless Prime Minister", and it concluded with these words:

But above all what is needed is a government that can be seen to have the determination and courage to try to act against inflation, the central problem of our time. Trudeau's supine indifference is simply an invitation to all Canadians to accept the inevitability of inflation and do what they can, individually and often against each other, to save themselves as best they can—the road to chaos.

It also invites the conclusion that if Trudeau won't try, then it's time to get somebody in that office who will.

It is not really an exaggeration at all to say that, not only is this government lacking in courage and in policies to meet our country's problems, but also that it is floundering from day to day in the grips of an obsession, the obsession of staying in power by any means whatsoever. Power for the sake of power has become the guiding principle since October 1972 on the part of an administration dominated by an emperor complex rather than dedicated to the principles of Liberalism which it has in reality totally abandoned.

In this House we have witnessed the sad performance of those who apparently are prepared to say almost anything, agree with almost anything and promise almost anything, in the hope that such action will enable them to cling to office. How tragically easy it seems for those on the front benches opposite to sacrifice any beliefs, to change any policies and to espouse any programs, in desperate attempts to cling to their portfolios.

Surely, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), at least now and then, I would hope, must feel twinges of conscience that tell him it would be more admirable for him to speak out firmly and strongly in the interests of the Canadian people rather than lurking coily in the wings,

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willing to swallow almost anything in the interests of being first in line when the emperor vacates the throne. Surely, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) must at least now and then secretly wish that he could be more than a puppet and pursue a real foreign policy for Canada rather than merely following the somewhat muddled and often unfathomable views conveyed to him from the palace on Sussex Drive. Surely there must be moments when the present Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) asks himself what kind of a department he inherited from his predecessor, and surely on occasion he must be tempted to risk the wrath of the east block by striking a blow on behalf of true Liberalism, which he supposedly represents in this House, by abolishing that totalitarian superpolice group perhaps better known as "Goyer's gumshoes".

A few months ago a respected member of the press gallery—if my memory is correct it was Anthony Westell—compared those on the front benches opposite in one of his articles to a group of extinct volcanoes. With all respect to this writer, it seems to me that such a comparison is not entirely appropriate. To say that those who occupy the seats of power opposite resemble extinct volcanoes is to imply that at least at one time this government amounted to something, no matter how extinct it obviously is today. Without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, the performance of this government since 1968 has clearly shown that it has never been composed of volcanoes, extinct or otherwise. A better description would be mountains of confusion never capable of eruption.

Surely, there must be times when some of those opposite, if not on the front benches at least among the back-benchers, must think seriously and regretfully about a great example of integrity they might well have followed. They once had in their midst on that side of the House a man who cared for the welfare of his country and its people above all else; a man who would never yield to political expedience for personal gain; a man who was Deputy Prime Minister but who, unlike the Minister of Finance, cared more about the problems of the nation than he did about inheriting a crown. How disconcerting it must be to those opposite that this man today still sits in this House with his integrity intact and his principles unsoiled. I refer, of course, to the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer).

I have found many persons in my constituency who seriously question the peculiar foreign policy of this country. What is the reason, they often ask, that this government seems to have turned its back on former friends such as Great Britain or those who live in the countries of western Europe? Why, they often ask, is our Prime Minister prepared to travel to Moscow and to Peking but apparently not interested in visiting Brussels, or Paris or Amsterdam?

No one can justifiably object for a moment to the diplomatic recognition of communist China. It would be unreal to pretend that it does not exist. But should we be so obsessed with the east, so orientally oriented, that we turn our backs on our diplomatic friends of longstanding in the west? Specifically, what can be said of the government's relationship with England? The words that best describe the situation are "shoddy" and "shameful". This