

The Address—Mr. Richardson

which I have been talking. National defence is not only involved in protecting Canada, it is involved in a great deal more. The Canadian Armed Forces are involved in many specific ways, some of which I have just mentioned, in helping to improve Canada.

When a dollar of the taxpayers' money goes into national defence, taxpayers are really getting more than double benefit. The main tasks I have described are being performed. In addition the taxpayer is receiving a series of hidden or other benefits. The first one which comes to mind involves the whole area of educational and vocational training. Many people perhaps do not realize that the Armed Forces are the largest educational and vocational training institution in Canada.

Canada's armed forces are involved in training in 90 different trades including everything from welding, flying, cooking and teletype operations. Literally thousands of Canadian men and, I am glad to say, increasing numbers of women all across Canada are serving Canada better and also increasing their own standard of living. This is all for one reason; because they are trained in a skill in the Canadian Armed Forces. The cost of this training comes out of the national defence budget, so when we are talking about defence expenditures we must think about education. We are spending educational dollars as well as defence dollars.

I do not need to mention the great industrial benefits that flow from the national defence budget. In many parts of Canada industrial benefits flow directly from national defence expenditure. I could spend a great deal of time, as I am sure we all could identifying these in detail. Perhaps we do not do all things perfectly, but think of our contribution to our fisheries and the environment. We not only assist in the identification of oil slicks or ships dumping garbage in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, we actually have skilled personnel with special equipment to help clean up oil spills. So we are involved in protecting the environment.

The Canadian Armed Forces are also involved in the development of the north through the building of airports. We are involved in the operation of search and rescue. If we did not have a search and rescue capability in the Armed Forces we would be required to create one, which would probably cost a great deal more money than is now being spent for this purpose under the national defence budget. All these things represent benefits that flow from the defence dollar.

If we experience a flood, or a national disaster, such as the one in Honduras at the present time, the Canadian Armed Forces are there, ready and able to assist.

● (2050)

There are even such small things, relatively, as ceremonial events. If the Canadian people should wish an honour guard or a band, this is all provided out of our budget. Then there is our youth program, the cadets. We have also the physical fitness program, and our involvement with great sporting events such as the Pan-am games and the Olympic Games. The double benefit that the taxpayer receives for the defence dollar is not as widely realized as it should be.

[Mr. Richardson.]

Mr. Forrestall: That is why you can spend more money and the taxpayers will accept it. It all goes back to them.

Mr. Richardson: That certainly is the case I am making. I appreciate the support from across the floor.

Mr. Forrestall: There is no support for your present position.

Mr. Richardson: Madam Speaker, since my time is running out I shall conclude simply by repeating that our four vital tasks are: protection of Canadian sovereignty, our participation with the United States in the air defence of North America, our work in defence security in NATO, and our work as a peacekeeping force. We not only perform those great tasks but also provide all these other benefits I have mentioned to the Canadian people.

We are improving Canada as well as protecting Canada, and I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, and fellow members of this House, that there is a group of men and women in Canada whose work means that they deserve even more respect than they have, and even greater appreciation than they receive. That group of men and women is made up of the dedicated and disciplined and hard-working members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Madam Speaker, since 1968 I have had the great honour of representing here in this House a well-informed, industrious and proud people, whose opinions, wishes and most legitimate aspirations I endeavour to reflect as faithfully as possible.

Spread out in no fewer than 47 municipalities, the people of my riding would dearly love to see their lot improved. They increasingly refuse to live like poors in the midst of abundance, wealth. For the most part, they live in villages, and those rural people know that public administrations, the federal government, do not concentrate their efforts in the right direction to help the people to be better off.

Hopefully, this our 30th Parliament should bear the stamp of innovations, of reforms appropriate to the needs of the times. We are going through extremely difficult and complex days. These times conceal a deep uneasiness from which could loom disastrous crises and catastrophies.

It is hardly the right moment to give as a pretext to our idleness the fact that an alarming international situation forces us to drift along with the world tide. Instead, we should strive to settle domestically our own problems with our own means. This 30th Parliament must respond quickly if it does not want to be swallowed up by social and economical crises that we could easily avoid if we had the courage to turn off from the beaten track.

Madam Speaker, without indulging in dark pessimism, I must admit that I do not believe this government is able to carry out successfully the tremendous work that is vested in it.

In 1968, the Canadian people as a whole believed for a moment that the new Prime Minister would introduce really new policies, through which his dream about a just society would materialize. Except for a few shy attempts at renovating, we have seen nothing, save legislation that