

Winnipeg South, who did not have to come to parliament for a career, was one of many Canadians in 1968 who thought the present Prime Minister would bring a fresh and hopeful spirit to national affairs. I do not know if the former minister of national defence feels deceived; I do know he feels disappointed, and for the country the tragedy is not that one more minister has gone; it is that the Prime Minister who was the repository of so much hope was prepared to trade it all away to take the advice of his flim-flam friends who contrive different incarnations whenever public opinion polls change.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: This was once a government of some purpose. No fair man can deny the sincerity of the Prime Minister's personal commitment to bilingualism, and perhaps to other goals. But that sense of purpose is gone. There is on the government benches an unmistakable and desperate will to stay in office, but there is no will to govern—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: There is no will to face the real problems of Canada, problems of regional disparity such as those raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) today, problems of falling productivity, and the fact that too many Canadians cannot afford to buy a home. That commitment went out when the ad men came in.

There is plenty of rhetoric in this speech about the potential greatness of Canada. We all know about that potential and we all accept it, but the job of government, the challenge of the real leadership, is not simply to tell us about our potential; it is to help guide the country toward responding to that potential.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: This government is in an unique position to do that. It has a solid majority in parliament although it is beginning to show strains and, until tomorrow's news at least, it has a full two years remaining in its present mandate. It has the support and assistance of a public service that is large and, in the great majority of cases, very capable, and it has a country and a people who are ready and eager to respond to some sign of genuine national leadership.

The real tragedy of the throne speech is that it fails completely to match either the mandate of the government or the legitimate expectations of the people of the country. In a country that needs above all to renew its trust in government and its confidence in itself, this speech offers more reasons for distrust and new causes of uncertainty.

It is not the job of the opposition to write throne speeches—we will come to that—and it is not our task two years before an election to present a legislative program—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: I appreciate the interest of my colleagues opposite in our proposing a legislative program, because unless we did that they would have nothing to guide them.

The Address—Mr. J. Clark

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Our responsibility instead is to put forth our sense of national priorities, and I have no hesitation at all in saying that our priorities are quite different from those offered by this government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: What are they?

Mr. Clark: I thank you for asking. The overriding concern at this point in time—I hope you are taking notes—must be to achieve the realistic growth potential of the Canadian economy. As I have stated on many previous occasions, sound economic growth is not an alternative to fighting inflation; it is an essential precondition to any successful long-term policy to contain inflation. If the former solicitor general, at present the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Allmand)—

Mr. Allmand: Not motherhood anyway.

Mr. Clark: I say this with a certain chagrin because he now has some responsibility for parts of my constituency.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Which one?

Mr. Clark: I know that that matter raises some interest on the other side because the Liberal party has no reason at all to know anything about electoral boundaries in Alberta.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Of course there is some competition for nominations in the Conservative party in Alberta. The only thing the Liberals run for in the province of Alberta is the Senate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I might come back to the question. The elementary lesson which the government seems unable to grasp is that it has a responsibility not simply to help redistribute national income but also to help generate national wealth and income. In my judgment a serious commitment to economic growth, not mindless growth but the realistic potential of our economy, is fundamental to achieving the broader aspirations of our society. Indeed, as I look at the problems of national unity in more than the momentary context I see them not so much now and in the decade ahead of us as a matter of language policy, as important as that is, but rather national unity in the next decade will depend on the capacity of all regions and all the people of this country to participate in the benefits of economic growth.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I see that the newly appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) is smiling at that matter and I cannot help but note that when he was home recently