

Speech from the Throne

words to authoritarian acts, diddled with the future of our people. Seldom was there any evidence of depth of feeling about the people's needs, their yearnings and their condition.

We have often heard this man speak of efficiency in the terms of the technocrat, cold and distant. He has used the power of his office to confuse rather than to clarify, to manipulate rather than to evoke participation, even to distort when he thought it necessary. We have heard him dismiss the tragedy of unemployment as a mere annoyance. We have seen him mouth unpleasant words even in this House of Commons and insult workers who could not strike back. He treated all Canada as his stage to act out his moods as if the nation's business was little more than a game.

I speak of the Prime Minister rather than of the government as a whole, because he has made himself the government in a way and to an extent not known before in Canada's history. More than any previous Prime Minister he has concentrated power in his own hands. It is doubtful whether even the members of his cabinet have as much say about policy and the future of this country as have the personal advisers with whom he has surrounded himself. He has concentrated the direction and even the tone of government in his own citadel. He has not been able to prevent the occasional leak, so that we sometimes learn of things not intended for our eyes and ears. His interpretation of participatory democracy is to tell Parliament and Canadians only what he thinks they ought to know and only at a time of his choosing.

[Translation]

He has doubled or tripled his entourage. Thanks to his court and his favourites, he has ears throughout the country, he has eyes in every department, and he has control over all important government functions. He has imposed amendments to the Standing Orders, not to modernize our proceedings—everybody would have agreed to that—but first and foremost to decrease the influence of Parliament and prevent it from interfering in any way with his own methods and plans.

The Liberal party, Mr. Speaker, inside and outside has turned itself to the promotion of the cult of personality; the unquestioning admiration of his herd, in this House, is proof of shameful moral abdication to the will and the whims of one man. They are the ones who have portrayed the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) as Machiavelli's Prince; he has simply played his part to perfection.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the right hon. Prime Minister's very words published in *Cité Libre* in 1963, about the Liberal party, and I quote:

Since I have been observing politics, I have no recollection of having witnessed a more degrading sight than that of all the Liberals who have turned their coats in tune with their leader when they saw an opportunity to seize power.

With the head of the flock showing the way, the rest followed with the elegance of cattle scurrying to the feeding-trough.

That very realistic description of the Liberal party still stands today, under the leadership of the man who wrote those words.

[English]

The Speech from the Throne is another example of the playacting of this Prime Minister and his government. It is

[Mr. Lewis.]

full of banal phrases about love, understanding and isolation. It is totally devoid of meaningful proposals or anything as lowly as a concrete plan. One of the very few specific undertakings in the speech, one of significance, is that "co-operation with the business and industrial communities will be extended even further". No doubt, Mr. Speaker; there is an election in the offing. The Prime Minister must not fail to extend co-operation to the 95 corporations on whose support the Liberal party has operated for a many years, according to a recent statement made by the Ontario chairman of the Liberal red carnation fund.

We are also informed that the Canada Labour Code changes and the competition bill are being revised to reflect the many representations made in past months. Whose representations are these, Mr. Speaker? I have little doubt that they are the representations of the Canadian Manufacturers Association and other allies of the Liberal party, and that the legislation will be watered down to suit their purposes.

• (1510)

I was therefore not surprised to find that the Throne Speech contained not a word about electoral reform, about limiting campaign expenses, about disclosing the sources of party funds. A Liberal government, you will recall, appointed a royal commission to study this matter. The commission reported in 1966. After much prodding a House committee was established and it reported last June, but the Prime Minister is not yet ready for a reform which he himself proclaimed as being essential to democracy. His excuse earlier today was that it was too late to apply it to the next election, as if he could not have done it last year and even the year before. But he will not make these changes, he will not have these democratic improvements, indeed not. Instead, he yields to pressures from his corporate friends to water down legislation and to shuffle cabinet ministers around so that nothing and no one could offend his corporate friends, particularly on the eve of an election.

Heartbreakingly significant is the fact that, despite talk in this Throne Speech about poverty, justice and isolation—and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) should have noticed this, and if he did not he should not hold the position he does—the Throne Speech does not contain a single reference to the native peoples of Canada, a group of Canadians who have suffered unrelieved poverty, injustice and isolation for decades. I cannot even understand the callousness responsible for this incredible omission.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Chrétien: Read the text.

Mr. Lewis: Finally, look at the couple of meaningless sentences accorded in the speech to the overriding concern about the foreign control of our economy. The words about Canada's identity and the greatness of our country have a hollow ring in the absence of a concrete undertaking to regain control of the economy so that Canadians may have the opportunity to shape their own future according to the social priorities of their own choosing.