

*The Address—Mr. Dawson*

are essential to the continuity of our country. This House, in the past, has been the theatre of many historical debates such as the railway debates and the national flag debates, and has always treated the problems with efficiency and wisdom. Again the House will be called upon not only to discuss but to find lasting solutions to problems challenging the basis of our society and of our country.

*[Translation]*

Because of the specific nature of the problems it raises and the way it deals with them, the speech that we have just heard is a message of hope. It is truly aimed at the future.

In recent years, Western economy has been faced with an increase of the scourges of unemployment and inflation. Countries which were once economically strong, such as Great Britain, Italy and other European countries, have been experiencing a daily deterioration of their economy without any hope for improvement. Third World countries, especially oil exporting countries, have suddenly become aware of their wealth and are now accumulating large stocks of currencies, which may be a threat to importing countries. Also, productivity, which is an essential prerequisite to any development or economic recovery, has been decreasing dangerously, especially here in Canada. It is impossible not to relate the weakening of the dollar to the constantly decreasing productivity of our industries.

It has often been said: other times, other mores. As was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, all economic theories currently applied in the past having partially failed, we must find—and rapidly—new formulas to solve the problems facing us. In this task, Canada will still demonstrate the audacity it has shown in the past. The speech which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) will deliver here in the House this coming Thursday evening will contain concrete and efficient measures which reflect the desire of this government to tackle our economic problems as vigorously as those same problems can strike us.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne already gives us an example of the measures which will be put forth by this government. Short and long term job creation programs will attempt to lower an unemployment rate that is already high. Measures meant to spur our economy and increase our productivity will give us the momentum we need to be competitive on external markets. Finally, new legislation dealing with investments will allow us to retain control over our economy.

Mr. Speaker, these are measures which will foster the welfare of all Canadians and whose repercussions will be felt, I am sure, down into my own riding of Louis-Hébert. If the increase in the price of our energy caused us to worry a great deal in the past, our present concern must bear on our future needs in energy supply. Similarly, in anticipation of times of scarcity our efforts must also be directed toward self-sufficiency in the area of energy. In that respect, Mr. Speaker, the message contained in the Speech from the Throne as well as the measures it proposes are unequivocal. The renewed exploration of known sources of energy and the increased

[Mr. Dawson.]

conservation of energy that we now have, combined with the efforts of the government and the excellence of Canadian technology, will result in our country becoming a leader in this area.

● (1710)

*[English]*

We now come to the main subject contained in the Speech from the Throne, national unity. As a matter of fact, nothing can be done, no lasting solutions can be found to our problems, unless we have a strong and united Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Dawson:** His Excellency, Mr. Pierre Dupuy, said in his opening speech at Expo 67 that great peoples are formed through continuity. Well, Mr. Speaker, Canada was created through continuity and dialogue and I think that is how it must progress and renew itself.

*[English]*

Canada, which was created in 1867, is not a country like others. It was not built on revolutions or wars. Among modern societies, our ancestors were the only ones to build themselves a nation that was founded neither on race, nor nationality, nor revolutionary ideology. The Prime Minister of Canada once said:

The Canadian citizenship is not based on geographic sense. It is not historic, but is more or less spiritual. Canada is not united by geography, ethnic ground, historic or even linguistic background.

The Fathers of Confederation have not followed any of the traditional paths. They created what was then called the "new nationality". They knew that for two centuries the founding nations of Canada had refused assimilation. Each culture worked to survive distinctly, and this new nationality had to be more complete than the traditional nationalities. Our country was built not only of different populations or political entities, but it was built on dialogue. Yet it seems that the dialogue which they were hoping for has had very bad and very sad moments. If we consider the language question of Canada, or the crisis of November 15, we can easily see that the dialogue has not been permanent. The discussions have often degenerated into debates and even conflicts between the different echelons of Canadian governments.

Where we stand now, we must have the same innovative spirit and wisdom as that which prevailed in 1867. On that point, Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted to quote the Speech from the Throne:

*[Translation]*

The Government dedicates itself profoundly to the re-discovery of the spirit of unity.

It wishes to learn from all who are interested in Canada and who have thoughts on how it can be made a better place in which to live.

It is prepared, particularly, to work with the governments of the provinces, all of whom have a vital interest in a better Canada.

We must create a climate of mutual understanding to promote dialogue and appropriate solutions to our problems.