

*The Address—Mr. Cullen*

prestige by tiresome speeches, lack of decorum, obstructionism and poor attendance in the House. The House of Commons is its own worst enemy and every time it aids its own weaknesses it chips away a little more of its own fabric.

That situation, Mr. Speaker, has got to change. I hope it will change—if not in this session, then in subsequent sessions. To be a member of this House is a rare privilege and new members are as conscious of this fact as are their colleagues who have served here for many years. We new members are convinced that the parliamentary form of government is best for Canada. But excellent as it is, it is not sacrosanct; it can be improved, albeit slowly. We have to make changes if the House of Commons is to continue to be relevant to the people of Canada.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, a few families speak French in my riding. Generally speaking, this is rather rare in southwestern Ontario.

Those voters speak English as well, which makes communication with them easier for me.

However, like many English-speaking Canadians, I wish to learn French, to show in as positive a way as possible that I accept the accomplished fact that we live in a bilingual country.

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

**Mr. Cullen:** Thanks to the encouragement and the valuable help of the Quebec caucus, of my colleagues, and the members of the Progressive Conservative, New Democratic and Cr ditiste parties, I hope, as other students do, that we will become increasingly bilingual.

Several persons have asked the members of English-speaking ridings why they wasted their time learning French, two sessions a week in the case of total immersion courses—the weeks of total immersion in Saint Jean, in Hull or in Ottawa—and this even during the holidays.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that English-speaking members have the duty to spread this idea of bilingualism in Canada.

We reject those who try to divide us, especially at a time when English-speaking Canadians are becoming aware of their responsibilities in recognizing a bilingual Canada.

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

**Mr. Cullen:** That is how we co-operate. It may not be much, but we feel that it will be of benefit to the country as a whole.

I apologize to my teachers for my errors in vocabulary, pronunciation and my halting delivery. However, and that is what counts most, I thank them for giving me the opportunity of taking a step forward.

*[English]*

Mr. Speaker, this is a time of great affluence in our society and, surprisingly enough, times of affluence create as many problems as arise in any other period. The dangerous psychology of our times has been characterized by one writer as “the revolution of rising expectations”. So, the man with one car wants, and expects, two; the man with the television set looks to the time when he will possess a colour set; the family which lives in an apartment is looking forward to owning its own home. And the psychology of the period gives these people every encouragement to expect that these ambitions will be realized. Those who are in positions of power within corporations, those who can decide upon prices and dividends to be paid upon shares, as well as those members of unions which have the strength to bargain collectively, share in the affluent society and this feeds their “revolution of rising expectations. But we in this House have a special obligation to look after those who do not belong to unions, those who do not have the power of the corporate structure behind them but who yet must live in today’s affluent society.

That is why this government, along with every member of this House, has a genuine concern for the aged, for pensioners living on a fixed and all too inadequate income, for the government’s own retired civil servants who deserve better than they are getting.

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

**Mr. Cullen:** We must look, also, to the position of the veterans who lost many years when they could have been gainfully employed; to the veterans’ widows and to those veterans who, though they returned, returned less capable of looking after their own needs than would have been the case had they not volunteered to serve their country.

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

**Mr. Cullen:** This has become almost a trite phrase but it bears repetition: government has an obligation to help those least able to