

*The Address—Mr. Cashin*

pressed in very simple terms, this issue is the quality of life in Canada.

We look about us and we see our forests and our streams, our cities and our villages, and we cannot help but have a feeling of pride. But as we read about unemployment, about juvenile delinquency, about crime, about the lack of beauty in the things we build, about the pollution of our air and our waters, we cannot help but have some doubt about the use we are making of the vast energies of our people and the wealth of our economy. We have, and we will increasingly have in the years to come, the opportunity to use our energies and our assets for the creation of a high civilization, one dedicated to the fulfilment of the individual and the pursuit of human excellence. But, Mr. Speaker, we will have to take stock of our sense of values and the direction in which our society is going, and we will have to establish priorities in our national life. That is to say, we will have to decide the things we want to accomplish in our society.

• (4:30 p.m.)

There is one priority which is fundamentally related to most of the problems which confront us. More and more, Mr. Speaker, education is beginning to replace the welfare state as the basic concern and commitment of our people. The sole criterion for education for all Canadians can only be the ability to learn. And as we resolve the quantitative problem in this field, we will become increasingly concerned with the quality of our learning.

Therefore it seems to me that in the next few years this is going to become a matter of great urgency in Canada. Already in the United States of America there is considerable debate in this field. In both our countries for a long period of time we have had, in a limited sense, federal aid in this area. But if we are to use the full resources of our great nation to cope with this problem, much greater financial commitment will be required and this, to me, inevitably suggests federal aid. Thus we shall need to be concerned about national standards of education. Before we determine the question of national policies we shall have to resolve the issue of national commitment to educational values and purposes, bearing in mind at all times the priority and the interests of the provinces. The improvements which will result are long term in their nature, but surely there are immediate steps which will have to be taken in determining the priority

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which Canada as a nation should give to this commitment.

This is a major issue in Canadian life and it is of itself complex and difficult to resolve. However, this particular subject is further complicated by the introduction of other issues and other factors, and the resulting complexities and controversies are likely to lead to general paralysis and failure. As a young man I might be expected to be naturally optimistic, and I say that, now we are on the threshold of putting a man on the moon, we can surely resolve this dilemma. To be sure, it will be a major test of our ingenuity, our understanding and our goodwill. It will be necessary for us to resolve this dilemma and to produce an acceptable formula. What are parliaments and politicians all about, if it is not to seek solutions to human problems?

While these past two sessions of parliament have been hectic and turbulent they have nevertheless been among the most productive in the legislative history of our country. I would hope, as I am sure do all hon. members, that the coming session will be even more productive in the legislative sense, if somewhat less turbulent and hectic. I feel certain that when we have had an opportunity to study the address we have just heard we shall conclude that it contains much hope and promise for the future.

In the past two years the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has shown a rare and perceptive talent in dealing with the particular and urgent problems of this nation. Perhaps more than any other man he understands the nature of our country. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when I think of the challenges which face Canada today I am confident that he is acutely aware of the situation and magnificently equipped to deal with them.

I am very much aware, too, that there may be among Canadians great division of thought as to how we should approach the challenges of the so-called affluent society. The decisions to be made will be complex and awesome in their magnitude. However, all the wealth of technology and scientific information which is at our fingertips surely opens to us new vistas and new horizons, making us dream dreams which can become realities. My concern—and I am sure it is the concern of all hon. members—is that we should utilize these opportunities to the maximum in order to bring a better life to our people, a life of quality and purpose.

Mr. Speaker, we ought not to be unduly concerned about the prospects of great