

Speech from the Throne

agree completely. I think we can resolve our differences of ideology as mature people who can look at the issues and confront them squarely. But, Mr. Speaker, what really irritates me about the NDP is the sanctimonious, holier-than-thou attitudes which that party adopts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: On every occasion, that party likes to feel that it is the possessor of all truth and wisdom. If we could go back to the days of Cecil B. de Mille and he were to make a film about this House, I think it is fair to say that if he made it according to an NDP version all the rest of us would sit here in darkness, total and utter darkness, and a thin ray of light from heaven would shine squarely down on their corner.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nesbitt: They don't even swear in the NDP.

Mr. Jamieson: It is perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker, that the leader of the NDP is finding no great difficulty in restraining his enthusiasm for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). Indeed, one can say that his attitude toward him falls somewhat short of idolatry. I realize that the Prime Minister does not need me to defend him against the slings and arrows that political leadership inevitably attracts, yet I must express my resentment about one comment which the leader of the NDP made in his remarks.

An hon. Member: Just one?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, just one. He was talking about the unfortunate effects on certain elements of our society which our economic difficulties are creating. He was talking about the Prime Minister's attitude toward those people. Once again I say that the government is fair game for the opposition to attack. But the Leader of the NDP said that the attitude of the Prime Minister of this country to those people was an attitude of someone who has never had to scramble to pay the rent. I say that is purely and blatantly an appeal to prejudice. I will tell you the sort of category in which I would place that remark. I place it in exactly the same category as another statement that at one time was heard in this House and it practically drove the NDP out of its mind. It has now gone out of existence; we do not use it any more. Putting it in its simplest terms, the NDP leader's remark is in the same category as the one in which it was alleged that no man was fit to sit in this House and govern if he had not had to meet a payroll. That kind of remark, in common with the remark of the leader of the NDP, was calculated to create a prejudicial appeal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the minister, but his allotted time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the Chair to assume that the House gives consent to extending the minister's time and that he may complete his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nielsen: Provided he sticks to the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jamieson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to hon. members and undertake not to impose unduly on the time of the House. I again say, in all seriousness to the NDP, that they are not the repository of all compassion in this House.

An hon. Member: The minister should think about his record.

Mr. Jamieson: I say to the hon. member and to others over there that although I cannot speak for the Prime Minister, I can speak for myself. I have had to scramble to pay the rent and I would be glad, even though I am not sure whether hon. members would particularly enjoy the experience, to trade poverty stories with them at any time they choose. There are a great many hon. members of this party and in this government who are in exactly the same position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: So let us have no more of this talk.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jamieson: I repeat that one group only does not hold the conscience of the House. All of us, in our own way and on the basis of our own convictions, are sincere people trying to do the job for which we were sent here.

I should like to make one or two other points of a personal nature, if I may, Mr. Speaker. Six of us in this House are different from other hon. members in one respect: we are different from all other members of the House. I speak of myself and the five fellow Newfoundlanders who are present. We are different because we did not mature or grow up as Canadians. Actually, we were adults before we became Canadians. We did not enter confederation until most of us had reached adult years. Of course, I can speak for myself and cannot speak for the other Newfoundland members, but I am sure that their sentiments are the same as mine.

I personally voted on two separate occasions against becoming a Canadian. My reasons for doing so, although it is not necessary for me to go into detail, had to do with the fact that I prized my independence. I was concerned about my personal independence and about that of my country. This is something which all of you can understand, I am sure, in your own way as we struggle in this country for a greater degree of independence and sovereignty.

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I say in conclusion that being a relative newcomer to confederation and having been honoured by Canada in a way in which very few people get to be honoured by this country, I perhaps recognize more than most the necessity for equality for all the people of this country.