

If any advice was of any use to him in Tokyo or Lusaka, I am happy about it and I am quite willing to repeat the experience. The national interest is the major concern of our party and we would take no pleasure in seeing our country badly represented at such vitally important international meetings.

Mr. Speaker, the government can continue to count on the co-operation of the official opposition for any of its initiatives which can improve the situation of Canada and Canadians. We do not believe in the senseless ritual which consists in voting against the government on every occasion and every issue. This type of irresponsible opposition that the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats have unfortunately practised in the past prevents Parliament from legislating and helps weaken its reputation among the people. Indeed, to vote against everything goes against the interests of the opposition parties as it erodes the influence that they can have on the people by keeping their negative votes for major issues which violate their basic political principles or which are in obvious conflict with the prime interests of the country.

On these last issues, on issues of this importance, we intend to give the government a fight such as this House has never seen before, with all the strength, the vigour and the determination that we can muster. On such major issues, we shall not hesitate to unite with other opposition parties to force the government to review its legislation under penalty of defeat in the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister said that he intended to govern as if he had a parliamentary majority. Those are courageous words from a leader whose government can be defeated any day and on any question by the combined forces of the opposition parties, a leader who failed to convince the people to give him a majority, a leader whose candidates won half a million votes fewer than the Liberal candidates.

Those are courageous words from a leader who cowardly delayed his inescapable meeting with Parliament longer than any other prime minister in our history. Indeed, almost five months have passed since the election, almost five months during which the Canadian people waited for the government to organize itself and find the courage to submit its measures to Parliament.

In the extreme, such an improper delay could be forgiven if the government had put this time to good use. But instead, we saw a government which, at best, appeared vague and confused about the orientation it wants to give the country, distrustful of all those it suspects of being enemies of the regime in the public service and flatly inconsistent in its public statements.

● (1520)

[English]

Let me illustrate a few of the ways in which the government has frittered away the goodwill which the public extends to any government in the early months of its mandate.

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

As one of his first acts in office, after pledging to bring government closer to the will of the people the Prime Minister appointed to the top economic policy-making position in cabinet a man who, after serving six months in Parliament, was strongly repudiated by the voters of Ottawa Centre. Senator de Cotret's continued presence in such a key cabinet position is a lingering insult to the voters who rejected him, an insult to the spirit of democracy and an insult to the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Sensing the unacceptability of that decision, the Prime Minister indicated that the senator should seek election to this House when the opportunity arose. Those, I believe, were his words. The senator, on the other hand, has shown no enthusiasm at all for subjecting himself to yet another repudiation by the electorate. I suggest to the Prime Minister that he should give Senator de Cotret a chance, or perhaps an ultimatum; either he becomes a candidate in one of the vacant ridings of Prince Albert or Burin-St. George's in the November 19 byelections, or he vacate his seat in cabinet.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I want to make it clear that I do not direct the same criticism to members of the cabinet from Quebec. It is important that every province have representatives in cabinet, and if they cannot be elected I have no strong objection toward their being appointed. But the Conservatives elected more than 50 members from Ontario. It is astonishing that the Prime Minister found it necessary to pass over practically all of them and give a cabinet seat to an Ontario candidate who was defeated.

Equally astonishing is the fact that the senator occupies one of the Ontario seats in the inner cabinet while metropolitan Toronto, which elected some 12 Tory members, has no representative in that central policy-making group.

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

[Translation]

Mr. Trudeau: Here is another example of the government's ineptitude: the issue of the location of the Canadian embassy in Israel. During his first press conference after the election, the Prime Minister solemnly stated he would keep his electoral promise to move our embassy to Jerusalem. He said he would not tolerate senior civil servants of the government or anybody else for that matter telling him what to think. Like a man of honour, he was going to take action and deliver the goods.

The Prime Minister did not suspect then that nobody would suffer more from his policy than those whose votes he wanted to attract. The main priority of the Jewish community of Canada is to protect their civil rights against any boycott threat from the Arab countries. Yet at this time, precisely due to the growing opposition aroused by this government's policy in this matter, the public is not as willing to support an