

*The Address—Mr. Peddle*

greetings and that prayerful supplication is sandwiched a deluge of, to my mind, the most preposterous, cliché-ridden, philosophical pap which ever purported to represent a preview of a government's legislative program. In a country like Canada, in days such as these, to try to relate this speech to the government which recently invoked the War Measures Act cannot fail—to quote both Sir Winston Churchill and the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker)—to boggle the mind.

I do not want you to misunderstand me, Mr. Speaker. I was not in the House on the invocation of the War Measures Act but I support the government in its action and I take this opportunity to go on record as saying so. But I do not and I cannot have much respect for a government which presents this document to the Canadian people and expects them to lap it up. If His Excellency the Governor General was somewhat embarrassed by having to read it, I can understand. And when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sat over there and smirked and giggled while our leader was subjecting the Speech to the scorn and the ridicule which it deserved, I think I understand this, too, because I feel sure that the Speech was deliberately intended to be ridiculous.

I cannot accept for one moment that the Prime Minister, who is widely noted for having quite an intellectual capacity, could possibly present this document to the Canadian people other than with tongue in cheek. In order to continue his show of disdain and contempt for Parliament and its traditions, it is very possible that he deliberately allowed this Speech to be made knowing full well that it was completely out of touch with reality, that it conveyed nothing to the great majority of the people. The Speech was a fitting opening to a Parliament in which he obviously does not believe.

There is only one other alternative I can think of, which is that the Prime Minister commissioned one of those hairy gentlemen with big, purple goggles—like Tiny Tim—to write the speech and that he himself did not have time to read it before it was sent to the Governor General. Hon. members can take their choice of these alternatives; either one of them to me is most discomfiting.

Take the first paragraph in the Speech following the birthday greetings, in which is this gem:

The passing of the 'sixties and the beginning of the 'seventies reminds us that Canada faces a new age.

Has it not ever been thus? In every decade have we not faced a new age? If this is not emphasizing the obvious, I do not know what I am talking about. The Speech continues:

● (9:20 p.m.)

—an age which will be subject to forces not all of which are yet comprehended or understood, forces which shall proceed from external as well as internal origins.

I think that means from inside and outside. It continues:

It is a new age not so much because of changed circumstances, but new because of changed values and attitudes.

[Mr. Peddle.]

Seriously, what does this jargon mean to the British Columbia lumberjack, the Ontario construction worker, the Nova Scotia farmer or, of all people in Newfoundland, the fisherman? I will tell you what it means—a great big, fat nothing. It is meaningless. It is words and more words. It talks of changed circumstances, changed values, changed attitudes.

The Newfoundland fisherman, lumberjack or miner cannot afford the luxury of these philosophical ramblings. He is too preoccupied with trying to live. I thought that this was a speech for all Canadians. There are people in Newfoundland who are too preoccupied with trying to pay the taxes that are extracted from them, not only by this government but by three or four different forms of government, and somehow decently support and educate their families on what they have left. The circumstances of these people have changed very little. Their values, except the value of the deflated dollar, remain of the highest. As for their attitudes, I think they are admirable and they have changed little—and I for one hope to God they do not change.

The second paragraph of the Speech is similar to the first, only worse. I feel once more compelled to quote it:

Because of the clash between these new values and the old, because of the quest by the young and the disillusioned for some resolution of attitudes, we live in a period of tenseness and unease. It is an age frequented by violence as desperate men seek ill-defined goals; an age of frustration as gentle men question impatiently old assumptions.

There is more of that sort of things, Mr. Speaker. I agree there is a quest in Canada; there is no question of that. It is a quest not only by the young and the disillusioned but by the old and the disillusioned and by the middle-aged and the disillusioned. Indeed, by the whole human population of Canada which is disillusioned. Certainly they are seeking some ill-defined goals. They are looking for some resolution, some crystallization of this will-o-the-wisp attitude on the part of the government. Tenseness and unease, I agree, do exist not only in Quebec but all across the country. They exist in the minds of those people whose very temperaments do not lend themselves to violence. There are thousands of desperate people across Canada today, and they are indeed seeking ill-defined goals.

One ill-defined goal that they are seeking is how the heck they are going to get through the winter with no income, with no job and in many cases with no unemployment insurance. How do they feed, clothe, shelter and educate their families under these conditions? There is your ill-defined goal, the ill-defined goal that cries out for definition by the government. But does the government define it? No. The government goes off at a philosophical tangent and talks in terms that can only be understood, if they are capable of understanding at all, by some people who occupy very comfortable niches in our universities or some such place. Certainly it is not a Speech for Canadians.

Then there are the "gentle men" who "question, impatiently, old assumptions". I agree that there are, but not in the way the government presents the picture. There is the old assumption that the government should be truly