

*The Address—Mr. Crestohl*

speeches in this house with a few words in French.

Mr. Speaker, I do this in order to stress the bilingual character of our country. I feel very gratified in fulfilling this duty and I propose to continue doing so whenever the opportunity presents itself.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker, it is six weeks since His Excellency the Governor General delivered the speech from the throne. Following this we heard excellent speeches from the mover (Mr. Cauchon) and the seconder (Mr. Simmons) of the motion to adopt the address and lest their content and form of delivery be obscured by the intervening proceedings, I desire, Mr. Speaker, even at this late stage, to join my colleagues in congratulating the hon. member for Beauharnois and the hon. member for Yukon-Mackenzie River upon the high standard they have set in the splendid addresses which they delivered.

I should like to address myself, Mr. Speaker, principally to one matter referred to in the speech from the throne. I realize that referring to the Old Age Security Act at this stage may at first glance appear somewhat *post facto*, but I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that even though the legislation has been adopted by the house, I think my comments will nevertheless be timely, because I desire to deal with the spirit of the legislation and relate it to its administrative prospects when it comes into force on January 1 next.

I was impressed, as was no doubt every hon. member in this house and every person in Canada, by the gentle description which the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) gave to the men and women of Canada who are affected by the act when he referred to them as our senior citizens. That is a much kindlier reference and a much more thoughtful one than the term "old age pensioner" which is commonly used. For, in truth, Mr. Speaker, they are our elder citizens and should justly be known and treated as such.

Advanced years is one status which we all seek to attain and desire despite the apprehension as to what the fates may have in store for us. It is a strange phenomenon that, despite the fears which human beings hold with respect to old age, we all strive to grow older. We often shrink from the thought that we are actually growing older and yet we constantly exploit all the sciences to preserve ourselves to be able to do so. In speaking of this apprehension which we have about old age I am moved to quote from the liturgy

of my faith very briefly. There is a supplicating prayer which reads:

"Cast us not off in our old age, and when our strength has ebbed do not forsake us."

That is a solemn prayer which people of all faiths utter in silence and in hope as the years move on. It is my conviction—in fact it is self-evident—that the adoption of this bill is an answer to that prayer. No one knows where he will be and under what circumstances any one of us may find himself at the age of seventy. Canada can now say with pride that it has not cast off its aged and has not forsaken them when their strength has ebbed.

With respect to the natural desire we all have to grow older, I am reminded of a little anecdote which is told about an ageing mother who at eighty years of age, because of her advanced years, was indisposed. Her considerate son sent for a physician to see her. The doctor with his charming bedside manner, and realizing her age, gently said to her, "You know, of course, madam, that time marches on and you, like all the rest of us, are not getting any younger". To which the little lady snapped back, "Young man, I don't expect you to help me get younger; you have been summoned here to help me get older, so get on with your job".

That, of course, typifies the desire of each one of us to attain that magnificent status to which years have no limit, but in which the years alone make us more dependent upon others. The problem of treating elder citizens has since time immemorial been a matter of grave concern to heads of governments and its solution has assumed various forms throughout the ages. I do not want to present a historic survey of how different peoples have treated their aged. I do not have to cite the Spartan approach or the Hitler system of doing away with human beings who could not bear arms because of old age or physical infirmity, but I do want to refer to one authority, no doubt the oldest authority, an authority which is indisputable and which sets into proper focus the lofty level of regard and the consideration which should be shown to our elder citizens, all of which is in consonance with the Canadian way of life.

Like one of my illustrious predecessors from the constituency of Cartier, the late Mr. S. W. Jacobs, who frequently quoted from the scriptures on the floor of this house, I too would like to quote from the ten commandments to which the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) referred the other night and which are universally acknowledged to be the first code of ethics given to man. The