

*The Address—Mr. Chretien*

It was premature at the time to launch a debate when we were unable to discuss the NATO agreements. It was impossible to take a stand until we were made aware of the solution that would be offered at that time. That is why I voted with the government, and when the debate is really opened on this problem I shall give my opinion and shall analyse the problems honestly according to the mandate my constituents gave me.

Mr. Speaker, some members can deplore, of course, the fact I am so nervous and I understand so little English. In any case, I believe that my position is highly defensible and, as Canada has acquired a reputation in international affairs for keeping its commitments, if there were any commitments, the member for St. Maurice-Lafleche will certainly vote in favour of fulfilling them. However, I reserve a final decision until we have had an opportunity to discuss the whole problem. I will not be satisfied with only an afternoon discussion. That is the reason why, in my opinion, it should be said that this issue was raised a bit prematurely and at the wrong time.

Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Maurice-Lafleche, like all the hon. members of this house, will make it his duty, when the government raises the nuclear weapons issue before this house, to examine both sides of the coin in the most thorough manner.

I conclude my speech here. It was my maiden speech and I wish to thank the members of this assembly for giving me such kind attention. I believe that even though we occupy the government benches we must give the members of this house the assurance that we will give our point of view on every matter raised before the House of Commons.

Anyhow, it will be clear for everybody that the riding of St. Maurice-Lafleche wants a progressive representation. It made a point of ousting a Social Creditor in order to return a Liberal member. I believe that my electors gave me an extremely clear mandate.

Yesterday I heard the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) say that the Canadian economy was under the control of the Americans. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how it is that the hon. member for Villeneuve, who complains of that situation, is a dealer for the Chrysler corporation, which is owned by the Americans. I hope that he will be able to give us an explanation for that situation. If he was so convinced of his opinion he would obviously endeavour to sell cars from companies other than American companies.

[Mr. Chretien.]

(Text):

**Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, this is the third time I have had the honour to represent the great district of Athabasca, the place where there are reeds; but I assure you the reeds are not shaken in the wind, except in the wind of false propaganda which recently somewhat thinned our ranks. I trust this situation will be shortly changed again. However, I do not intend to waste the time of the house in recriminations. My attitude has always been one of positive suggestion and contribution.

Last September I challenged the present Prime Minister to bring forward policies superior to those of the administration of which I was a supporter, but in the speech from the throne I see little promise to Canadians of any such change. In any member of parliament or any member of a government I as a taxpayer and as a Canadian citizen look for more than promises and empty words. I look for character, and surely one of the important aspects of character and stability. It is not enough to mouth high sounding phrases about freedom, democracy, independence and sovereignty; those phrases must be implemented and the Canadian people must be guaranteed independence, progress and sovereignty.

We are asked to believe that this new administration is going to give us this stability, but I should like to review the record. A short 18 months ago the present Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) said that nothing could be gained by having atomic weapons on Canadian soil. At that time I thoroughly disagreed with that stand. I spoke on the same day, September 12, 1961, but what I said was, of course, ignored by members of the press because they only print what they want to print. They did not report what I said. At times they refuse to cover what they know is the bald truth.

At that time I begged the Minister of National Defence to reconsider his stand. He wanted to get out of NATO. It is in the record at page 8231 of *Hansard* of 1961. He said that nothing would be gained by adding atomic weapons to our arsenal or by joining the atomic club. Why the change? Eighteen months ago the Liberals were a family of bird watchers, but now I suggest that they have been watching the eagle much too carefully. Don't try to hang "zombie" around my neck. I served my country; I made a good stand.