

Speech from the Throne

helpmates of disadvantaged regions of Canada, and is this not actually happening? Is this any way to pursue national unity, to pursue a just society? Not in my books it is not, Mr. Speaker. When you are prepared to take pride in the doubtful accomplishment of having made the weak appear to be relatively stronger by virtue of making the strong weaker, you have in fact declared bankruptcy by any accounting of your sense of national responsibility.

In the field of foreign policy the government has, as far as I am concerned, an erratic scorecard: there are some achievements that I approve of and a number of moves that I consider to be quite irrational. In the latter category was the government's unilateral decision to reduce Canadian participation in the operations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I think that that decision damaged our country in at least two different ways. First, we weakened the impact of our voice in the councils of NATO at a time when the importance of that body as a diplomatic force in the quest for peace and disarmament was growing by leaps and bounds. Considering our own expressed concern in this area, I would suggest that the government's decision and approach was, at the very least, illogical.

Secondly, our partial withdrawal from Europe gave the impression over there that Canada was not really very interested in its relationships with continental Europe, and that impression has not helped us at all in this country's efforts to ensure favourable economic relations with the European Common Market.

Mr. Sharp: Why do you promote that point of view, then? It is not the government's point of view, but maybe it is the Leader of the Opposition's?

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I do not rate the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) as one who always understands things, but I thought I had put it simply enough for him to understand. There is no question but that the reduction of the Canadian commitment to NATO gave the impression in the capitals and countries of Europe that Canada was not much interested in relationships with Europe.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The minister can shake his head all he likes, but like other Canadians who have visited Europe since that decision was made I know it is only too true.

Mr. Hees: Mitch does not get around enough to know about that.

Mr. Stanfield: I want to touch on one other foreign policy criticism which relates to how the government has behaved in the course of the improvement in our relations with the Soviet Union. I want there to be absolutely no doubt that I welcome such improvement. We should by all means talk frankly and in the most cordial possible terms to each other, and I did not, and I do not, express reservations about the exchange of visits between Soviet and Canadian leaders. But I do not consider it appropriate for a Canadian Prime Minister to express concern in public in the Soviet Union about our relations with our neighbour, the United States. Neither do I believe it appropriate for the Premier of the Soviet Union to pronounce publicly on

those same relations here in Canada, especially when the Prime Minister of Canada does not dissociate himself from any of those assertions. Incidentally, I was quite pleased to see the Prime Minister dissociate himself from certain remarks about NATO which were made by the President of Yugoslavia.

Canadians object, and rightly object, if there is any indication that Washington is interfering in the conduct of our external affairs. The same ground rules should obviously apply to Moscow, as they should to any other part of the world. The sheer closeness of the United States, the intensity of our mutual economic interaction, combined with the distance between us in terms of wealth and in terms of power—all these things guarantee that there will be problems in Canadian-United States relations without anybody having to do anything deliberately to worsen the situation. To do so is to act irresponsibly toward the people of Canada. Furthermore, it is degrading to an otherwise very worth-while endeavour.

When I get on to the topic of our relations with the United States, particularly in the course of an assessment of the government's record since it took office, I cannot help but think about how the "just society" became the "secret society" when it came to the elusive Gray report. The Gray report, you will remember, Mr. Speaker, was commissioned as an analysis of the problem of foreign investment in Canada. It was to tell us the facts and recommend solutions. For that reason it was, and it is, a vitally important document to every Canadian.

After first promising that the report would be released and open for discussion, the government did an about face and decided that the report was too much for the Canadian people, that the people would be protected by making the report a confidential cabinet document. That, Sir, was not only insulting, it was stupid and self-defeating. The result was a leak that became a flood. First, there was what purported to be a summary of the report published by the Canadian *Forum*. That was quickly followed by the Southam News Services publication of a secret cabinet document. That cabinet document showed clearly that the government had tried to mislead the Canadian people when it suggested that the Canadian *Forum* paper was not really very important.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): One of those heavy water leaks, Bob.

Mr. Stanfield: A heavy water leak is nothing compared with the flow coming from this government. I feel sorry when the hon. member for St. Boniface is reduced to the point of coming back to heavy water, because it indicates that he is in a very sad state of bankruptcy.

Mr. Korchinski: He is a pothead on a trip.

• (1250)

An hon. Member: Go back to the grass.

Mr. Hees: Some grass!

Mr. Stanfield: I do not want to irritate these people unnecessarily. I understand that the morale is not very high there anyway.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!