

*The Address—Mr. A. Brassard*

I will no doubt have the indulgence of the house if I am a bit more personal in my remarks in regard to the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet, not because I failed to convince his constituents to elect another representative, not because he tried himself to convince my constituents that they should vote for someone else, but rather because I have known him since my college years, as well as several members of his family.

Let me say that his distinguished brother Andre and I were fellow students. This brother is now a Catholic chaplain with our army. I also know other members of his family, and I can say with every sincerity and honesty that every one of them is a credit to their distinguished parents.

However, I would not want the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet to infer from these remarks that I wholly endorse the actions and policies of the new Conservative government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank the Conservative government for having provided this house with simultaneous translation. I do not believe that there is anything humiliating nor degrading for any one to recognize the good one finds in his opponent, and it is for this reason that I will rather speak in French, thus breaking away from a tradition which I used to observe, that is to speak at least fifteen minutes in English and fifteen minutes in French when delivering a speech in this house.

Mr. Speaker, what I should like to establish in my speech, is that there is a lack of cohesion among the ministers who lay down the general policy or administer our national affairs.

Let us examine for instance the field of agriculture, for one. I do not need to remind the hon. members that the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Harkness) who, fortunately, is in his seat tonight, addressed the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union not so long ago. He then expressed before the members of that group his personal ideas on agriculture in our country. The press made much of his speech and did not fail to recall what the right hon. Prime Minister had said on the same subject on another occasion. If the house will permit I will quote the *Western Producer* of December 18, 1958 in order to show to what extent the Minister of Agriculture and the right hon. Prime Minister are in perfect agreement on Canadian agricultural policy. I will put on the record part of the report in the *Western Producer* of December 18, 1958. I quote:

[Mr. Brassard (Lapointe).]

(Text):

In his address to the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union Mr. Harkness, the Minister of Agriculture, touched on the question of reducing production. He was throwing out a strong hint when he said: "I feel that some voluntary reduction of wheat acreage in favour of diversification should be undertaken to relieve congestion in the wheat trade." Arguing in favour of this suggestion he went on to state: "In these days of a semi-controlled economy it seems natural to suggest that control be exercised at the producing level as well as at the marketing level, for it is at the production level that alternatives exist."

Mr. Harkness has been giving air to these similar sentiments off and on for some time. It is no exaggeration on our part when we say that we see in this an appalling state of affairs. It indicates a total lack of understanding of world conditions as they exist now. This in a minister of the crown, a leading member of the Diefenbaker cabinet, is a very serious matter.

One wonders whether Mr. Harkness realizes that he is taking direct issue with his own leader when he proposes restricting production? Perhaps it will refresh his memory if we quote again the remarks made by Mr. Diefenbaker when he opened the Saskatoon exhibition after his first victory at the polls last year. The new Prime Minister then said:

"To those who think that in agriculture we have arrived at a point where we need no longer expand I say to you this:—"

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister is a very good orator.

"—I learned one lesson at the commonwealth conference in London. We must expand our agricultural development.

"With one quarter of the world's population going to bed hungry at night methods must be found to enable the distribution of our surpluses to the end that happiness will come to the peoples of the world.

"Together we must preserve the peace of the world and hold ourselves through agriculture as a bulwark against communism."

Who speaks for the government, Mr. Harkness arguing for restriction or Mr. Diefenbaker advocating expansion?—

Yet Mr. Harkness talks of restriction. Let him read these further words of his leader. Speaking in New York on the eve of his departure on his world tour Mr. Diefenbaker said:

"The great triangle of nations—Great Britain, the United States and Canada—must join with others of like mind in a common effort to assure new hope for the betterment of peoples who have been disfranchised from the bounties of providence.

"It is a primary duty to be our brother's keeper to those underdeveloped areas of the world and to give aid, both economic and technical, so that the gulf between their living standards and ours shall become narrower.

"Since we in North America are blest with more than our share of the good things of life we have an overriding mandate in that we must help those who have less."

And Mr. Harkness wants to reduce production! How can he win with plenty if he deliberately promotes scarcity? How can he eradicate want in needy countries unless he can devise acceptable methods of distributing food to those who haven't ready cash? Mr. Harkness and his colleagues have a lot to learn before they catch up with and fully understand the policies enunciated by their leader.