

The Address—Mr. Bigg

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, my first words during this debate on behalf of the people of the district of Pembina must be of congratulation to yourself on your re-election to your high office. I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand) and welcome him to this house. On the last occasion I spoke in the house I said I hoped very shortly that we would have a man here representing those people of the great Indian nations in Canada. From the contribution he has already made I know that we can look to him to be the champion of these first citizens of Canada.

The problems facing the Indian people are many and the hon. member's task will not be an easy one. For hundreds of years his people have been the neglected and forgotten people of Canada. The hon. member's chore for many years in this house will be that of bringing forward their problems. I assure him there are many of us in the house who will wait for his contribution and will be only too pleased and ready to give him all the assistance we can.

Let me also congratulate the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), who made such a statesmanlike speech on behalf of his people in this chamber. He was positive, confident, balanced and optimistic. We are fortunate to have a man of this calibre representing his people. This is a man who not only has a different colored skin, he is a man who is already a great Canadian and we welcome him to this chamber.

I wish I could continue in this vein, Mr. Speaker, and spend the next few minutes in congratulating others, but what I have to say now touches on a note of sadness. We have as Prime Minister in Canada today a completely bilingual young man who came from favoured circumstances. He is a man who never experienced personal poverty and has had the advantages of higher education. As a result I expected that this speech from the throne would be a notable one in Canadian history. I thought that perhaps by putting aside any political feeling in these matters we might have with us again a new Laurier.

This speech from the throne is more notable for those things which were left unsaid than as a blueprint of a new, dynamic program for Canada. It appears to me to be a good example of the difference between a great deal of knowledge and little wisdom. The speech has been widely publicized and, unless I am mistaken, there has been a great deal of disappointment expressed even by those members of the press who were ready

to give this man great kudos. This disappointment has been expressed by those who expected a change comparable to the conversion of Saint Paul.

I have heard from the Prime Minister's own mouth, and have read from what has been written by his own pen, certain things I never expected to hear or to see printed in Canada. There has been a direct attempt to create a division between the two great cultural peoples of Canada. He has not fooled anybody when at times he has slapped the face of his own people in order to get support from those he thought were not ready to support him.

There is hardly a member of this house who is not ready to follow a positive, loyal and dynamic approach to Canadian affairs. It is not good enough to say that we take for granted those ancient loyalties. It would be easy to say, about a man like the late General Vanier, that his past record of service to this nation left nothing to be desired. We do not have to look at or question his loyalty. However, when there is and has been a long period of doubt as to where one stands, it is necessary to make positive statements and to take a positive approach and stand in respect of loyalty to our Queen. Nothing less can be expected in this country of ours.

We have the right of free speech, even to the point of revolutionary free speech; I would not deny this to any man. When the Prime Minister of Canada speaks, whether he likes it or not he speaks for me and for my constituents. When he expresses loyalty to this nation, he must speak for all those with whom he does not agree politically.

Having regard to that part of the speech from the throne which has relation to international affairs, it is very important to me and to every other Canadian to know exactly where we stand on international affairs. It is not good enough to say, "Oh, we meet in conclave. I discuss with my ministers where we stand in NATO, where we stand with reference to Red China and the Soviet union." The predicament of Czechoslovakia, the situation in Rhodesia and Biafra and any other matter which impinges upon the rights and liberty of Canadians should be made clear to our citizens. We have a right to know. We are going back some 250 years, in the history of the British people at least, if Star Chamber tactics are resorted to. When Prince Henry IV kept company with such men as Falstaff and spent his life in pubs and

[Mr. Dumont.]