

the Prairies and British Columbia to build a country of which they can all be even prouder than they are now.

Can anyone honestly claim, Mr. Speaker, that in their last four and one-half years in power the present government has helped unite Canadians in the pursuit of a common goal? Can anyone honestly claim in this House that Quebec and the Atlantic provinces are happier now? Can anyone claim that a last minute effort to make the western provinces believe that their needs will at last be met was enough to mislead them? And does anyone really believe that Ontario and other provinces will be pleased with the way in which their money was spent on inefficient programs, total failures, intended to reduce regional disparities?

[English]

We need a new alliance—an alliance of English and French-speaking Canadians along with those of other cultures; an alliance of provinces and regions; an alliance of all Canadians determined to work out their own future in association with each other. We have the human resources, we have the natural resources, and with determination and good will we can move ahead.

We must start by restoring confidence in the government and in the economy of this country. We must start by committing ourselves never again to permit a government deliberately to slow down our economy and thus create suspicion and frustration from one end of our great country to the other. We must go on from there in association with each other to build up Canada in all its elements and aspects, and in all its human and physical diversities.

No one could be more pleased than the members of my party to note the prominence given to the Crown in the Speech from the Throne. On the occasion of the opening of the twenty-eighth parliament some members may recall that the Crown was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne; perhaps hon. members recall my comment at that time. Whatever else may transpire this year, all Canadians will be pleased by the presence of Her Majesty the Queen and His Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in Canada not only on one occasion but on two occasions.

to the hon. gentlemen opposite on the front benches including, of course, my right hon. friend the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). Even while he may not be entirely comfortable in his present circumstances—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): He is more comfortable than you are.

Mr. Stanfield: I want to assure my hon. friend from St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) that I never felt better in my life. I am happy to see that my right hon. friend appears to be in good health even though, perhaps, he has not fully recovered from the experience of the last election. He seems to have had a good rest and to be ready for the rigours of this session.

I listened to the language of the Speech from the Throne with very keen and considerable interest. With respect to much of the language in the throne speech, many of the words in it and a good deal of the policy proposed, suggested or hinted at, I would have to say only that I could have done better. I cannot commend the Prime Minister

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either for originality or for innovation, but I do congratulate him on a very considerable effort at plagiarism. What this speech represents is an abject confession of failure, a more or less contrite admission of incompetence, an astonishing lack of commitment and a bankruptcy of original thought.

• (1500)

It might be difficult for a compassionate man to read that speech and not feel sorry for its author if he did not know that the speech represents monumental cynicism rather than an act of repentance. One would have to be either naive or simple-minded, or perhaps both, to accept at face value what appears to be this miracle of conversion. Of course, Sir, this government has always been noted for its style. Style was the essence of its policy, or lack of it, and it was a grand style. Its rhetoric ranged from high blown generalities, such as the declaration that Canada stood at the threshold of greatness, to premature and pious proclamations, such as the announcement that the war upon inflation had been won and inflation had been licked. This was a grand style made grander by the expressed conviction that parliamentarians, at least those on this side of the House, were nobodies. It was a style of utter sophistication punctuated by four letter words.

Now, after four and a half years, this government produces an epic failure in economic management, yet during that time joblessness and welfare became a way of life for hundreds of thousands of Canadians; a term of office actually described as wasted years by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis). After all this, the government comes limping back to parliament, its ranks riddled by casualties, disguised in sack cloth and ashes with that old arrogance recycled into something that is almost obsequious humility.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: We are looking at a government that has not only lost its style, not only lost its majority, but has lost its credibility just as surely as it has lost the trust of the Canadian people and just as surely as it does not have the confidence of this House.

The question of trust and confidence is part and parcel of the question of credibility. What can be said of a government which has presided for four and a half years over folly and failure; four and half wasted years during which it squandered its mandate? What can be said of a government which comes before parliament today advocating policies that it opposed yesterday and abandoning policies today that it championed yesterday? Virtually every paragraph in this Speech from the Throne represents either a retreat from its own policy or an attempt to retrieve something from somebody else's policies. After the wasted years in which the battle to contain inflation was fought by the unemployed, by pensioners and those on fixed income, all of whom bore the brunt of the failure of that effort, the government proposes now, in the Speech from the Throne as we read, to have a committee sit on this problem. Of course, not even that meagre response originated within the ministry. Giving credit where credit is due, the proposal to establish a parliamentary committee to make a special study of the problem of