

The Budget—Mr. Buchanan

Mr. Cafik: You are right.

Mr. Nystrom: —to contribute to disunity in two years than has this Prime Minister.

An hon. Member: Right again.

Mr. Nystrom: The work of the B and B Commission is important. I am one of those who are going through the process of attempting to learn the French language. I wish more MP's would do so. But we are only fooling ourselves if we think that bilingualism and biculturalism alone will keep Canada together. They will not. They will not keep Quebec in Confederation; they will not keep the people of western Canada happy.

To keep Canada together as a nation we need social and economic reform—measures which will bring equal opportunity to everyone in this nation. A person living in the maritimes or in rural Quebec should have as good an opportunity as one living in Vancouver, Montreal or Toronto. All regions will have to be equal partners in Confederation if this country is to continue as one union until its 200th birthday. To find out whether or not the government's regional economic policies are working, all one has to do is travel about the country. They are not. This is one cause of the rising tide of separatism in Quebec. People are upset because unemployment has risen to 10 per cent and is still increasing. The federal government is showing no leadership.

Quebec is not the only province which is unhappy and alienated. Go out on the Prairies from farm to farm, from small town to small town. You will find widespread discontent. People are asking: Why has Ottawa forgotten about us? Why is the man who proclaimed national unity, a new approach in politics and a new deal bringing about unemployment on a scale we have not known in this country for so long? This is the threat to national unity. When people are desperate they will seek alternatives, any alternatives. They are ready to try almost anything because, they argue, nothing could be worse than the conditions they are facing.

This is where Parliament ought to come into the picture. I believe we ought to be more relevant to the issues confronting the people of Canada. We must chart a new course, get out where the people are and concern ourselves with the things the people are talking about and doing. If we fail, they will seek alternative arrangements and alternative

means of solving their problems. Right here is the challenge confronting each and every one of us.

As a Parliament and as a nation we must examine our role in the international community. Canada is respected as a middle power and could probably be doing much more to lead the world toward a more stable international community. We ought to be reviewing our foreign policy, and moving as rapidly as possible toward such things as the recognition of communist China, supporting its claim to representation at the United Nations. We should strengthen the United Nations and work to make it a more meaningful international body, one with some measure of sovereignty and capacity to act.

We must do all these things quickly, because people today will not wait. They know we have the resources, that we have a rich country with an advanced technology. They are asking why, in these circumstances, 20 per cent of our people should be living in poverty. Why does unemployment have to be at such a high level? People are asking these questions, and we must move faster to find the answers if we want to keep this country together. I hope the government remembers this, no matter what happens in the Quebec election next Wednesday.

Mr. Judd Buchanan (London West): Mr. Speaker, my comments are somewhat in the nature of a pot-pourri, as there are several subjects on which I should like to make brief remarks. The first relates directly to the contents of the budget which we are discussing. I was most disappointed that some additional provision was not made for our needy senior citizens. In my remarks on the budget in the fall of 1968 I urged that the government give serious consideration to discontinuing the payment of the family allowances on the first and only child in each family and, instead, use the funds saved by this change to double the guaranteed income supplement which we pay to needy senior citizens.

This would ensure that all Canadians over the age of 65 would receive a minimum income of approximately \$150 per month if single, or \$300 per month if married. I would suggest that this is the minimum income needed for survival in today's society at any decent level. I believe strongly that we have a very great obligation to these senior citizens who worked and built this country throughout the depression years and the war years which followed, when pension plans were virtually unknown.