

The Address—Mr. Wagner

Mr. Speaker, as far as I know and as far as the people's wishes are concerned, there are and must only be Canadian parties in this House, parties capable of meeting the aspirations of the two founding peoples of our country.

Mr. Speaker, we must find answers to the problems of the day and even now prepare to meet the challenges of the '80s. However our friends of the government are not ready yet.

How can they anticipate solutions for tomorrow when they cannot in a Speech from the Throne in 1973 clearly offer remedies to current problems; there has been a change of style certainly but the status quo remains as far as inspiration and efficiency are concerned.

The government would rather cling to power in complicity with the New Democratic Party. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the elderly who are fed up with having to barely survive from one election to the other are waiting for what would allow them to live decently and with dignity. In the meantime also, Canadians in general, literally crushed by excessive taxes, are faced with daily increases in the cost of living especially the cost of food whose control is constantly delayed. Yet, from month to month, the humiliation of unemployment or its ghost keeps haunting thousands of Canadian families. The government has disgracefully underestimated this human and social problem, satisfied as it was with an insignificant winter works program which was announced so late that nothing can be done for this winter.

However, during this time, small businessmen are putting aside their planning programs because they are unable to find out where the government is going.

During this time also, the farmers—especially in eastern Canada and Quebec, such as the farmers in Saint-Hyacinthe for instance—are being penalized by quotas for industrial milk and by the cost of feed grain.

A word of warning to the government: Quebec is tired of being considered by this government as a poor relative within the federal Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, these are practical problems for which the Speech from the Throne offers no definite solution nor a priority list.

People are asking for more!

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason for our lack of confidence in this government.

The failures this government has experienced from 1968 to 1972 are still prevailing under a marketing approach which can only last as long as a coat of cheap but glossy paint.

From now on, how can the Canadian people, especially the young people, believe more deeply in public affairs and public men, in our institutions, when they are bound soon to find out that political parties, such as the Liberal party and the New Democratic Party, change their style according to the mood of the moment or the circumstances surrounding an election?

Where is that public honesty that should constantly preside over the actions and behaviour of those in public life? Certainly not on the government side!

[Mr. Wagner.]

This government is losing its credibility, for it is showing a lack of competence when confronted with alarming problems, and probably also a lack of principle.

As the member for the Saint-Hyacinthe constituency, my duty is to hasten the defeat of this government.

[English]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the land is strong but to keep it strong we need a direction for Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will call upon the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) at two o'clock. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, many distinguished members of this House have spoken in this debate already. I am honoured to participate in it at this point, and honoured to follow the distinguished member on the other side, the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), who had the floor just before the luncheon hour, and whom I welcome to this House.

Like all others who have participated in the debate I would like to extend congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and I would also like to congratulate the House for its wisdom in again electing you to the office you hold. I think this House will require all of your abilities, particularly one of your most marked abilities, that of displaying a delightful sense of humour, something which I hope you never lose. May I also congratulate your constituents, Mr. Speaker, for giving us the opportunity to re-elect you so that you may serve your country and parliament. In passing may I say that I have always found, in the two departments with which I have been associated, that in order to get civil servants to act more quickly it was useful to tell them, "This is something Mr. Speaker wants." Somehow when they are told that they snap to it in ways in which they otherwise might not.

May I also congratulate the two new members who moved and seconded the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. The hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais), in moving the motion, expressed very well his concerns for his riding and his country. I recall having had the same honour as he some years ago, and I know his feeling and that of all new members, the feeling of pride, of hope and of promise, when first they come to parliament. I can assure them, at least from my own experience, that they are entering upon a career for which they will have no regret, the most honourable and rewarding career to which any Canadian can aspire.

The hon. member for Lachine (Mr. Blaker), is to be thanked, especially from my point of view, for expressing the recognition that urban Canadians have special problems, not to mention special opportunities. In his speech