

Speech from the Throne

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): There has been no change since 1968; in fact, there has been no change since 1962-63. They are still talking about the short time when they were the government. I think they are still dreaming about it and are not doing the constructive job that they should as the loyal opposition. They rearrange their speeches, possibly with a few more words, but they all have the same meaning, the same criticism, the same lack of feasible suggestion.

As an example, let me refer to their own convention held last December 5, 6 and 7 at the Chateau Laurier. I have here a few notes extracted from the various reports and papers. The subject of prime interest to the delegates was Canada's economic independence, the guaranteed annual income, tax bill C-259 and auto-determination for Quebec, but the delegates were so mixed up, Mr. Speaker, they did not know which way they were going. The delegates were not of one mind, the story went, about whether anything at all needed to be done about the extent of foreign ownership of the economy. It was also fairly clear that more of them supported a moderate form of economic nationalism. For example, the first resolution on Canadian economic independence stated that the federal and provincial governments should take urgent steps to reach a consensus on long-term economic and political independence in Canada.

I am now speaking of the Conservatives, the loyal opposition, Mr. Speaker. Disagreement amongst them on the subject of taxation was so widespread that their committee on economic affairs held a special debate on the subject. Many delegates wanted taxes to be cut but could not agree on how much or the way in which it should be done. Others argued that the government must cut back on spending, but again they did not know how to do it. Discussion on the tax bill was mostly negative. May I repeat that last word—negative. I do not hear too much hollering this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, because there are so few members in the House. I am surprised that they do not come and listen to some of the backbenchers once in a while.

The question of the guaranteed annual income scheme was first raised by Mr. Stanfield in 1969 and created a conflict between left and right wing Conservatives in their own committee discussions. As a result on the final ballot there was a resolution indicating the need for a guaranteed annual income.

I could go on and indicate that the members of the loyal opposition do not agree amongst themselves on their own policy. In fact, they have not got any policy. They do not agree on it, Mr. Speaker. They do not agree on leadership, either. I could go on about that particular convention. It was said that it was the dullest event that occurred in Ottawa that week. Unless you were a Conservative and attending that convention, by gosh, you did not know it was going on.

• (1420)

An hon. Member: Stay in there, Joe.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): The opposition, Mr. Speaker, has framed no understandable policy on the nation's basic problems. I see some hon. members want to enter the

chamber. There are so few opposition members here that I welcome them.

Mr. Paproski: Stick to your speech.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I can give as good as I get, so I ask the hon. member to be careful in what he says. The opposition, may I repeat, has not framed an understandable policy with respect to the nation's basic problems. It has contrived no specific issue and has relied, so far, only on the government's unpopularity, a negative and dubious assumption.

I wish to refer to the challenge thrown out by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), as recorded in *Hansard* for February 18, page 36, in the bottom paragraph of the right hand column.

I challenge the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, to describe honestly and candidly to the Canadian people what their posture towards the United States would be in this difficult negotiation. Would they have gone to Washington cap in hand, to employ their own phrase, and agreed to a forced upward valuation of the dollar in order to prove their friendship with the United States? We didn't, and we did not endanger Canada's good standing with the United States in any way by not doing so.

The Prime Minister went on to say—

Mr. Woolliams: Good for him.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I see the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) has come in. It is nice to see him in the House on any afternoon. The Prime Minister went on and said:

Would the Conservatives have made unilateral trade concessions in order to free us of the requirement of tough bargaining? We didn't, and we don't intend to do so now. Just what is the stand of the Conservatives. A sell-out to the Americans to prove friendship? Or do they secretly admire the way in which the government has handled these negotiations but are too small to say so publicly?

The Prime Minister also said, as recorded at page 37 of *Hansard*:

If the opposition parties disagree, then I wish they would address themselves to that issue and those objectives and stop chasing their colourful theories.

My question then is, Mr. Speaker, why has this challenge not been taken up by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition? Why is it that when challenges have been thrown out by the Prime Minister and other ministers in this House, the loyal opposition has not at any time taken them up? I also wish to ask members of the loyal opposition and their leader if they would like to tell the House what their party policies are on such matters as foreign ownership in the economy?

Mr. Forrestall: What are yours?

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): What is their policy on taxation?

Mr. Forrestall: What are yours?

Mr. Woolliams: We know what your policies are.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): What is their policy on a guaranteed income?

Mr. Forrestall: What is yours?