

*The Address—Mr. Trudeau*

to face declarations of intent and quite often could not count on any agency to which they could appeal effectively. However, at the time when the whole of Canada gives serious, genuine and substantial indications that the country is ready to recognize a bilingual Canada, I urge them once more to keep on developing and making their needs known, and not to retreat, not to get discouraged.

*[English]*

As I stand in my place, Mr. Speaker, I occupy two roles: the one as a member of the present government, the other as a member of parliament. The first of these roles is dependent upon the second. The greater honour, the greater responsibility flows from my membership in this house. It is an honour and a responsibility that we all share. We sit here as representatives of the people of Canada. We do so with pride, pride in this historic institution of parliament, pride in the democratic process which brought us here, and pride in the techniques which have evolved to convert the needs and wishes of society into legislative practice.

But our pride must not blind us to the fact that at this very moment thoughtful questions are being posed in this and many other western countries as to whether our systems of government have outlived their effectiveness, whether new approaches and new institutions are necessary in order to preserve and enhance the human values which our society prizes. We dare not remain immune from these questions or these criticisms.

It would be easy indeed for us in this house to ignore the discontent expressed in some quarters of Canada, particularly from the young, that the institutions of government are not reflective of the demands of 1968. It would be easy to do so, but it would be wrong. There is abroad in Canada and elsewhere a spreading concern that the traditional techniques of governments are incapable of responding adequately and in time to the changing needs of society. This concern we ignore at our peril. We ignore at our peril as well the accumulating evidence that governments in the past have all too often responded to the symptoms of social unrest rather than to the root causes, that they have done so because their distance from the people has filtered out any direct involvement with the daily problems of the individual. We know from our own experience as parliamentarians that from time to time we sense frustration in our seeming inability to contribute to this

*[Mr. Trudeau.]*

house fully of the energies and talents which we have brought here with us.

This criticism, this evidence, provides a challenge not just to the government but to parliament. We are given an opportunity in this place, in this session, which may not again present itself. It is the opportunity to prove to Canadians, ourselves included, that a parliamentary form of government is not only capable of meeting the demands of this complex age, but that it is more capable of doing so than is any other form. It is the opportunity to prove to the world that a democratic system is not only representative of the wishes of the majority but that it does in fact protect the minority. It is the opportunity, in short, to illustrate that parliament is both protective and effective, protective of those traditional values which we all cherish and effective in recognizing and dealing with the present needs of our contemporary society.

I firmly believe that this institution of parliament has for centuries proven its superiority over other forms of legislative bodies because it has demonstrated its ability to meet adequately the changing demands made upon it. Neither the parliament of Canada nor the parliament of any other country has every added to its stature by clinging to its past at the expense of its future. When hon. members discuss the need for procedural reform, they do so mindful of the strength which parliament has attained from the wise evolution of its procedures over the years. The problems which now face Canada, and which her elected representatives are dedicated to solve, are not the problems of a Walpole or a Pitt or a Gladstone or a Churchill, nor are they the problems of a Macdonald or a Laurier. Within the areas of responsibility of this twenty eighth parliament of Canada are matters of economic and social consequence of such depth and breadth, and of such complexity and number, as would have staggered the imagination of many of our predecessors.

By common consent the role of government has spread into areas where it had never previously extended. By obvious need, the entire panoply of scientific achievement is now mustered in aid of any legislative solutions. Notwithstanding these increasing demands, the time available to this house each week for the conduct of its business is not significantly greater than it was a century ago, nor have the traditional and proper roles of government and opposition changed. It is the government's function to propose legislative solutions. It is the opposition's task to