

In conclusion, may I say that out of my concern for the future of an area to which I feel so deeply obligated, it is my earnest desire at this time to become of some assistance, in any little way, in those common efforts which have been and are yet being made, with a view to finding an equitable solution to what undoubtedly is a very difficult situation indeed.

The motto of the Acadian festival held at Caraquet, New Brunswick, last summer was the following: "Où il n'y a d'espoir, le peuple meurt"—"Where there is no hope, the people die." Nothing is more profoundly needed in the hearts of those for whom I have just spoken than hope.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Hon. Raymond Eudes: Honourable senators, at the start of my remarks, I join the Leaders of the Government and of the Opposition who spoke before me in congratulating Senator Buckwold who moved the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne as well as Senator Renaude Lapointe who seconded the motion.

Both of these senators, drawing on past experience acquired in the course of their careers, and each in a characteristic style, marked the debate in a most meaningful fashion.

These two honourable senators will, we are sure, make valuable and efficient contributions to our debates.

As usual, the criticisms of the Opposition in this house, and more particularly in the other place, followed by commentators of the media, both printed and electronic, voiced their customary censure of the Speech from the Throne.

It was taxed with being vague and a tissue of pre-election, inexplicit proposals, none of them clearly defined.

Who could expect a government, within a Speech from the Throne which normally comprises a few thousands words, to analyze in depth all problems facing the nation and suggest there and then, in an explicit synthesis, the measures to be brought before Parliament in order to solve each and every one of these problems.

In fact, even though it would have been more proper for the Opposition to show more objectivity, it was perhaps for the best. The Opposition has its function to perform, and this function of censure, finally, sometimes becomes an incentive for the government to improve its policies.

Without ascribing this beneficial effect to the criticisms formulated by the Opposition, I submit that this Speech from the Throne stands as a continuation of government policy. The goal it set itself during the election campaign before the general election of 1968 and the opening of this 28th Parliament is getting closer, that is to establish a just society through every available means.

Having pointed out that events during the last session had demonstrated to what extent values are changing and attitudes shifting, having recalled that we had gone through a period of international economic uncertainty which affected all of the industrialized countries of the world, the Speech from the Throne underlined the extent of our dependence on a strong economic base to achieve our social goals.

[Hon. Mr. Michaud.]

This speech then revealed the main objective of the government, and I quote:

One of the major challenges facing government is to remove the impression of isolation which so often surrounds men and women, depriving them of their sense of worth, of accomplishment, of fulfilment, and removing from them their identity as individuals.

Expressed perhaps in different terms, this main objective shows that the government is seeking its goal, that its policy is guided by the same ideal: to establish a just society.

This just society, as stated in the Speech from the Throne, must therefore remove completely the social, economic, racial, religious, cultural and intellectual disparities isolating the individual from the society in which he lives.

The government must undertake to remove all barriers leading to isolation, in order that each citizen may freely exercise his rights and that his human dignity be upheld and acknowledged.

The entire Speech from the Throne is based on the respect of the individual and his human personality.

The government intends to submit to our attention about thirty measures to free the individual from such isolation.

I will only briefly discuss the following measures which are dealt with in this excerpt from the Speech from the Throne:

The Government will lay before you proposals . . . to deal more compassionately with those in our midst who require help, to involve more Canadians in the ferment and satisfaction of community activities.

It is the view of the Government that the most important single factor in the attainment of individual dignity and active social involvement is the assurance of a secure income.

Security of income, means of livelihood or subsistence without apprehensions about the future are, without doubt, the basis of a just society, the most efficient tool to fight social isolation.

Indeed, how can we imagine that a man capable and anxious to work but who has become unemployed and is unable to provide his family with food, clothing and lodging or another who does not enjoy the same standard of living as his neighbour can consider themselves as useful members in good standing of a just society.

The government is aware of such conditions when it states in the Speech from the Throne that—

Unemployment continues to be a matter of intense concern and will remain a primary focus of attention and action—

adding that it will—

redouble its efforts to make sure that as many jobs as possible are available and that the fullest possible use is made of the skills and initiatives of those who are seeking work.

The government is committing itself, although it warns that we must not confuse unemployment and poverty, when in the same speech it states more or less in the following terms: