

The Address—Mr. Friesen

Mr. Friesen: That is the best the Postmaster General has to offer. Then, as recorded at page 1006 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville said this:

If we were to introduce a device of this kind we would be in a position where at least all issues of moral content, in the generally accepted sense of the word, would have to be submitted to the vote of the people. There is no possibility of isolating a single vote of this kind and treating it as something separate.

It seems to me that in our system the only case in which a referendum could be justified would be one dealing with the system itself. . . . If we had a similar case here which was changing our future course, or a vital question dealing with the government itself, that would be different—

Does the Prime Minister have in mind the changing of the system itself? He has suggested that on previous occasions. He has said that the government will have to take some action in the marketplace. As Prime Minister does he have in mind changing the system? Then I assume the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville would feel justified in supporting the Prime Minister's ideas on a referendum.

The speech of the hon. member was followed by a statement from the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne), who was here a few minutes ago but has now left the Chamber. As reported at page 1007 of *Hansard* he said:

A number of complex issues to do with the questions at issue cannot be solved by referendum.

There in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, is the problem which the Prime Minister faces within his own caucus on the matter he proposed so glibly in the House the other day. Just a few months ago we had an occasion in the House when members from Quebec voted en masse against the opposition because our famous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) failed to produce a document in both official languages. They still supported that action even though it was a denial of the very principle they have been espousing all these years. What is a mystery to me and to many people across Canada is that the Prime Minister says that on matters relating to the economy the law cannot restore economic equilibrium in this country, that what we need is the collective spirit of all Canadians. It is not the law that will change the economy, just the collective spirit of Canadians. But when it comes to the language issue, he says that only the law can provide equality.

Just a few evenings ago we had the privilege of attending a gala performance in the National Arts Centre. I count it a privilege because it was a great performance from beginning to end. I think whoever it was who was in charge of planning that occasion, as far as the talent assembled there was concerned—

Mr. Roberts: Me.

Mr. Friesen: The Secretary of State says it was he. I compliment him on that, because the talent from beginning to end was of the very highest quality and the spirit was great. I note there were about 150 Conservatives, New Democrats and Social Crediters invited, and 2,150 Liberals and their hacks and money raisers from across Canada. As a matter of fact, I sat next to one of them from the Yukon, the official agent who had been told by the PMO that he was going to meet the Queen, on the plane coming down here.

[Mr. Blais.]

The climax came with the André Gagnon performance, which I thought was superb. It was an exquisite expression of creativity in music. We saw it last year at the Olympics. It illustrates my point that for 300 years our French culture has been flourishing and thriving and has been creative. There has been a flowering and a burst of activity in the last generation as never before, without legal support, without the need for constitutional rearrangement. We have seen the flowering of the expression of French in that province as never before, and I think this is to be welcomed. I applaud it and I enjoy it. André Gagnon's performance the other night proved it.

But the next day, Mr. Speaker, we attended not only an ecumenical but a bilingual church service, and I could not help but be amazed at the contrast. There were some people taking part in the service who obviously were brought up in the French language, which they used in the most beautiful, limpid tones of which that language is capable. It was beautiful to listen to, and I enjoyed it. Then we heard those trained in recent years; butchery, mutilation of a beautiful language, killing it. Why anybody would want to decimate that lovely language by using it in the way it was used, and as it is constantly used by people trained late in life, I will never understand.

That language and that culture have been preserved for generations, indeed for centuries, because the people love and enjoy them. People will only preserve such things when they have esprit de corps and love for their culture. No one in this country can make that happen. I can see what the Prime Minister is going to do. Like Elmer Gantry he is going to take his religion of culture across Canada and peddle it in each of the shrines of the provinces.

He will probably begin in the maritimes where there is already something of an agreement to preserve bilingual education, an agreement which was easily reached. Then he will come to Ontario. Ontario has been in the vanguard of providing bilingual education for the people of Ontario. Then he will move on to meet the newly elected premier of Manitoba. That is a province where, I understand, during the provincial campaign about a month ago the Liberals spent \$1 million trying to get a few Liberal members elected. One was elected and they managed to reduce their share of the popular vote to 12 per cent. They have the same investment policy for the economy, incidentally, and they get the same kinds of returns.

● (1602)

That is the province where a gentleman by the name of Forest—for a decade he has been called Forest but now, all of a sudden, he is called Forêt—received a traffic ticket some months ago which he is now refusing to pay, even though he has been convicted, because the traffic ticket was not written in both the official languages of Canada, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) has been sending men from his staff over to Manitoba to protect that man's rights. I wonder if that is what the Prime Minister had in mind in his Speech from the Throne, although I do not know how a traffic ticket can be