

*Speech from the Throne*

grams in order to improve workers' abilities and help them adapt to available jobs. It is the same government which has clearly informed the United States that it was not prepared to make unilateral commercial concessions detrimental to Canadian workers.

It is the same government, Mr. Speaker, which had attempted to rationalize various important industrial sectors in order to increase their efficiency and which will introduce during the present session of Parliament an industrial strategy together with amendments to the Fair Employment Practices Act and the Canadian Labour Code. It is the same government which has also proposed radical changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act and designed the local initiatives program which has resulted this winter in the creation of 82,500 new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this again illustrates the difference of approach between the opposition parties and our party. The leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Lewis) has stated, for instance, that we were exceedingly optimistic when we forecast that 70,000 new jobs would be created and that we would be fortunate if we could reach 50,000. Well, Mr. Speaker, our forecast was in fact incorrect; it actually failed through excessive modesty because we have already reached the 82,500 mark.

Mr. Speaker, no one on this side of the House is trying to elude the problem of unemployment. But we meet it with legislation and programs and not, as the opposition does, with sophistries.

The Local Initiatives and Opportunities for Youth programs constitute, in the field of employment, original experiments whose success cannot be questioned. They have shown the way in which public funds can be used in a system of decentralized decision-making. The participation at the local level of private groups and municipalities avoids administrative delays while allowing for the dynamic contribution of those who are most familiar and most concerned with the interests of their social community. The real originality of those programs lies in the fact that they favour local participation and decision-making while creating numerous jobs and bringing the community lasting benefits.

Moreover, those programs reflect our feeling that the greatness of Canada will be measured not by the level of the gross national product but rather by the way in which we use our resources to solve our human problems.

• (1450)

[English]

Canada should not be measured in terms of gross national product, or miles of railway line, or by the number of telephone calls made by each person in a year. Outsiders do not think of us in those terms nor, in the final analysis, do we. Canadians have little desire to be the biggest in the world by any standard of measurement and have no desire to be more powerful, more influential, or more visible than any other country.

There is something much more than mere familiarity which binds us to our country. There is here a quality which is recognized often by outsiders but which we seldom admit to ourselves. It is a belief that in this country, perhaps more than in any other, there is an opportunity for each of us to be ourselves—to be creative, to be free,

[Mr. Trudeau.]

to be accepted. We have been influenced by our vast spaces and disciplined by our rigorous climate. For centuries we were separated by thousands of miles of open sea from our cultural fountainheads in Britain and France. For 150 years we have learned to live in peace and co-operation with a restless, energetic giant which in its stirrings often seemed unaware or uncaring about our somewhat precarious existence on its northern flank.

We have here every opportunity of escaping the wretched and needless consequences of racial or religious or linguistic turmoils which have reduced men and women in many places to bestial levels of hatred and vengeance even as it exposes their children to misery and brokenhearted distress. The promise and the potential of man is surely not to be wasted in such destructive pursuits.

We have not always escaped these kinds of activities in Canada, but we have been able to contain them and it is my earnest hope that we can avoid them in the future. We can do so by recognizing that discontent is often a product of injustice. This country is ever so much richer and offers ever so much more freedom to individuals because of its human diversity. There is no uniformity, no flatness, to Canadians. They are themselves to a degree not possible in many, many societies. Canada is richer by five million times through the presence here of that many persons whose cultural heritage is other than British or French. We dare not attempt to imagine how bland Canada would be, how devoid of so many exploits and accomplishments, were these people not part of our society.

Nor could I conceive of a Canada without either of its major fractions—those persons who trace their origins back to Britain or to France. If at any time major elements of any of these three fractions, or of that fourth fraction which preceded us all, our Indians and Eskimos, were to disappear, Canada would cease to be what it is today and we should all be the losers. This change could come about, I suppose, by some kind of government coercion but it would be a most unenlightened political party, quite unlike any on the Canadian national scene today, that would attempt such a retrogressive step. More likely, this abandonment of our past and surrender of our identity could come about through indifference and assimilation.

Of these there will always be some, I expect, but I believe that the great majority of Canadians view this land as a place where each of us is able to grow and reach fulfilment, secure in the knowledge that we are free from discrimination; a place where Canadians who live and work and play and think in either the English or the French language may continue to do so and to communicate confidently with their government in their own tongue.

I regard these attributes, Mr. Speaker, not so much in terms of Canadian unity as in terms of the character of Canada. The overwhelming majority of Canadians living in every part of this country conduct their lives and carry on their daily relationships with other Canadians on a basis of tolerance and understanding and common benefit. When I see evidence to the contrary, however, evidence of policies which can have no other effect than to turn Canadian against Canadian and to fracture this