

The Address—Mr. La Salle

not what one can get from one's country, but what one can give one's country.

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, would my hon. friend from Provencher (Mr. Smerchanski) be willing to answer a question?

Mr. Smerchanski: Yes, I shall try to answer it.

Mr. Mongrain: I heard my hon. friend mention the name of La Verendrye as a discoverer of the west. Does he know that La Verendrye was a native of my riding and that he lived there all his life?

Mr. Smerchanski: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of that, but if he was, then that makes us related brothers from Provencher.

Mr. Mongrain: He was from Trois-Rivières.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my first words will be to congratulate you warmly on your election as Speaker of the house, but the fact that you have obtained the full confidence of all members easily explains the respect which is shown to you everywhere, and I am quite pleased to point this out.

Allow me also, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) as well as the ministers, the party leaders and all the members for having obtained the confidence of the people whom they represent. To all, I extend my best wishes of success.

Needless to add that I would have been pleased to congratulate the new Quebec Conservative members, but I realize that I will have to wait until the next elections.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would have many things to say, but due to the time allotted for my speech, I will, in the next few minutes, take advantage of this occasion to be practical in my judgment, even though this may seem difficult for some to accept. At any rate, I am convinced that my opinions are permeated with a sincerity which everyone is looking for and I am equally convinced that truth will serve my constituency, my province and my country.

Mr. Speaker, needless to tell the right honourable Prime Minister that everyone living in my constituency and in *la belle province de Québec* is anxious to see as soon as possible the realization of the just society which he promises. I need not tell you, my dear colleagues, that I wholeheartedly

[Mr. Smerchanski.]

endorse this noble ideal called the just society.

Before going any further, I think it is essential that I say why I spent so much energy and worked so hard to get a seat in this house. It is precisely because I hoped—and I still hope—to give the province of Quebec and the French-Canadian people the representation that is essential to its emancipation and its expansion, all this for the greater benefit of Canada as a whole.

As a newcomer to this house, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that I represent, first of all, the aspirations of my fellow-citizens on the provincial level. What I say may be disputed, but I am firmly convinced that my first duty in this house is to work for my province as a whole. Similarly, I recognize that the same duty falls to my colleagues of the various other provinces. If we do so, together we will build marvelous provinces, co-ordinated, of course, by the central government. I say "co-ordinated" and not "centralized", because I see a huge difference between the two. That very fact will bring us to build a country and the provinces will be proud to be a part thereof.

● (4:40 p.m.)

I shall limit myself to a very few remarks on the Speech from the Throne, because those who preceded me have said so much that we will end up thinking that the Prime Minister should never have presented such a program at the opening of the session.

I will say right away, Mr. Speaker, that I am well aware of public opinion regarding the loss of valuable time in the course of each session. I do not have to tell you that I am very interested in changing our parliamentary procedure which will, above all, preserve the practices of a true democracy. Being a new member, it comes to my mind that instead of wasting about ten days in reply to the Speech from the Throne, which is really a repetition of criticism or an oratorical contest, I wonder whether it would not be more logical to allow the party leaders the liberty to edit this speech, if necessary, to approve it or to submit suggestions that would improve the agenda of the current session. This would, in my opinion, eliminate this loss of time in order to deal with priority legislation in the best interests of the Canadian people.

Among other things, it is regrettable that in the Speech from the Throne the right honourable Prime Minister thinks about constitutional reforms over a long period of time. You will agree, Mr. Speaker, that as a Quebecker, I