

*The Address—Mrs. Sauvé*

through mean calculations, Cabinet members to be isolated from their constituents?

For if our duty lies clearly within this Chamber, it is also very important as far as the people are concerned, since we have the responsibility of maintaining contacts with the people who have elected us, of consulting them on the way they would like us to conduct the affairs of state and since we have the duty to inform them of what is happening in the House of Commons, because we are not working here for us but for them.

The Member of Parliament, the parliamentarian is so much more efficient in the House of Commons as he has the opportunity from time to time to go back to those who have elected him in order to try to understand what their aspirations are.

As a new parliamentarian, I must admit that every time I have had the opportunity of meeting the people, when I accepted to speak before a few groups, I was always enhanced and renewed by these experiences, for it is obvious that a politician is renewing only at the source of his mandate. Voters are the source of his mandate. He has the duty and the responsibility of maintaining contacts with voters.

The situation of the minority government, mainly the situation created by the opposition party, certainly prevented us from discharging this portion of our responsibilities. Because it is not as some like to say that it is by sitting on the opposition benches that one renovates oneself politically speaking. This is obvious after a session such as this one, when one sees that the opposition parties did not succeed since it is said that they are in the best possible situation to renew themselves. They did not succeed in suggesting coherent measures to deal with the problems we are facing.

But it is because, in spite of difficulties, we have kept government initiative that we still have the right, during this second session, to keep on governing.

I would like to deal very briefly with another aspect of opposition and namely that of parliamentary holidays. I do not know of any Parliament in the world sitting as long as ours. Under conditions which we all know, the opposition took advantage of our minority situation to make our task even more difficult. For example, by ignoring the school vacations, they have pursued sterile debates to try and break the morale of hon. members who saw the days passing by without being able to take turns as the opposition members did and spend some time with their families.

Particularly in Canada, the size of which is such a geographical challenge, an agreement should allow those of us from both ends of the country to meet our family obligations. The children of those hon. members have the same rights as other children and I am convinced that Parliament could meet this reality if it were not for the prejudicial game of the opposition members.

Some hon. members made the sacrifice of their holidays which they had scheduled with their family and I still remember one of them saying during a meeting:

[English]

It means a lot to me, but I would give it up because I know that this government has maintained its will to govern.

[Mrs. Sauvé.]

[Translation]

However, Mr. Speaker, these are situations about which we should agree so that it may be possible at least to practice this profession, which is a great one, in somewhat better conditions. I hope that the opposition has come to the end of this hide-and-seek strategy and that during this second session it will consider the House as a place of work rather than a trap to grasp power.

In this House, we discuss bills, but we can do it well only if we refer to what the people are thinking. To be able to do so, we must go among the people from time to time.

My main objective, Mr. Speaker, is of course to tell my colleagues about the part of the Speech from the Throne which deals with my department and, with your permission, I shall now talk about the business of the Ministry of State for Science and Technology and, more specifically, about the intention expressed in the Speech from the Throne to reinforce the mandate of this department.

The foundation of liberalism has always been to remain within the path of history and to favour a concentration, based upon circumstances, on the natural forces of society for the advance of humanity. From that point of view, scientific activity played a leading part and was one of the major forces in the changes since the last war.

● (1630)

Over the past decade, the awareness of the impact of science and technology on evolution has led us, and ours is not the only country, to re-examine that area of government expenditures. Even here, in Canada, numerous studies have been initiated on this problem. Among others, there was the Glassco Commission whose terms of reference did not include this but however it did consider that problem, the Mackenzie report, the Gendron report and, more recently, the Senate investigation on scientific policy presided by hon. Senator Maurice Lamontagne. The OECD has also initiated studies on the impact of science and technology on changes. It is perhaps the results or impact of major scientific research programs of the major industrial countries which have drawn attention on this area of government expenditures.

Arising from the success of those scientific programs which were called "Big Science", many countries have set up, as we did, a department whose function is to coordinate the research endeavours within the country and to make those endeavours contribute to the national objectives. In this respect, we ought to congratulate Senator Lamontagne for having conducted his inquiry with such strength, in spite of many criticisms at times, for in some circles what he was trying to do was very little understood, and for having wanted to make the whole country understand with this inquiry how important was the scientific activity. Senator Lamontagne's report represents six years of hearings during which groups interested in this area of activity have submitted briefs and made their opinions known. The hon. senator has published many works in which he has given us an exhaustive analysis of the state of science and technology in Canada and by which he has made us able to make comparisons with some other countries, since it was somewhat difficult to assess objectively, without any point of comparison, whether what we are doing is consistent with what is