

*The Address—Mr. Vincent*

mention two matters. First of all, I should like to congratulate the mover (Mr. Cote, Longueuil) and the seconder (Mr. Basford, Vancouver-Burrard) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, for the gracious manner in which they performed their tasks. Of course, this privilege they had at the beginning of a new session will put them in an orbit which will be an honour reflected upon their fellow citizens and their respective electoral districts.

This afternoon, as I was listening to the speech on the address, I was proud to note that in this federal parliament, the representatives of all parties can express themselves in their own tongue and be understood by their colleagues.

Much has been said since the beginning of this session about national unity, bilingualism and biculturalism. We have in this house a proof that a certain party did not merely talk about those questions but acted in such a way as to provide this national parliament with a system which enables us to understand what our colleagues are saying in their own language. I am referring of course to the simultaneous translation system which was given us by the Conservative party and by the leader of that party who has too often been slandered in the province of Quebec, and who, rather than making elaborate speeches about bilingualism, preferred to act and to give us something which permits the hon. members from the province of Quebec to express themselves in their own tongue and to be understood by their colleagues from the other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I should like this afternoon to make a suggestion to this government. I should like them to find out whether it would be possible to set up that same system in the House of Commons galleries so as to permit visitors to listen to their representative whenever he is not using their own language. This, Mr. Speaker, would help to promote bilingualism as well as prove to the Canadian people that here, in this House of Commons, we practise that bilingualism which we proclaim on the official level.

Mr. Speaker, I should like also at the beginning of my remarks to congratulate the newly-appointed ministers.

I wish also to extend my congratulations to those private members who have become members of the executive council of this country. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that in the performance of their duties, they can count, despite difficult moments they will have to live through, politics being what it is—on the support of all hon. members of this house, even those who are not of the same political

allegiance. Very often, we criticize in order to obtain better legislation for the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I have represented the people of the beautiful county of Nicolet-Yamaska in the federal parliament since 1962, that is for nearly two years; I have heard about co-operative federalism, bilingualism, biculturalism, bi-ethnic nation, separatism, pseudo-separatism. I feel these concepts are most important and must be studied if we want to reach a better understanding of the role we have to play as a Canadian nation, that is two distinct nations seeking a definition of the objectives they must meet in order that Canada may become a beautiful country. But I feel that we should not overlook another role which is just as important. I mean the responsibility of seeking means of increasing the economic welfare of the people we represent. In that connection, I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to a situation which took place during last session. How many members took part in the sittings of the railway committee in order to question Mr. Gordon and Mr. McGregor and hear what they had to say? How many newspapermen attended those meetings in order to report on them? My intention is not to blame the newspapermen, for what seems important today is sensational news; the public is eager for sensation. Now, during the last session, the members who sat on these committees, such as the committee on agriculture, had to wait for a quorum before being able to start working, and the work of that committee is most important. I need not tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at these committee sittings there was room for reporters and spectators. One morning of the last session, I remember that we were 13 Conservative members and that we waited at least 20 minutes to have a quorum, that is 20 members. The sitting resumed in the afternoon and again we were 15 Conservative members and we had to wait at least 15 minutes to have a quorum.

This fact I am reporting, everybody has experienced it.

Let us stop seeking only excitement. Let us be practical. Let us study the problems which confront us. As for us, the members for the province of Quebec, and even those representing other provinces, let us avoid referring to purely regional questions; let us avoid bringing up questions which may give rise to an endless controversy.

As far as we are concerned, in Quebec, when we have succeeded in turning our fellow citizens into economically strong citizens, the question of separatism will no more crop up. The only means to possibly resolve this problem is to work towards strengthening