

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

Thomas Huxley once said that the feeling of uselessness is the heaviest burden to be endured by our system.

No Canadian should be considered as a useless person; all citizens should have, on the economical and social plan, the opportunity of a full and fruitful life. Is that what we are offering them when we ask those farmers, who are also pedologists, botanists, mechanics, meteorologists and dealers, to leave their homes in order to settle down in areas where there is no demand for their particular skills? The Canadian farmers, by their sense of responsibility and their dignity, always represented one of the constitutive forces of this country. It would be unfair to under-estimate the contribution these men have made to our society. In some areas of Canada, the necessary transition should be brought about with great care. The federal government commits itself to do so and to respect, in this matter, the rights of all the citizens concerned. A legislation to improve the present situation of the wheat producers will be referred to Parliament for consideration in the course of the present session. Furthermore, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) will soon explain the various steps which have been and are now taken to prevent the return of such conditions.

In the course of last summer, Mr. Speaker, we have heard, again both with admiration and concern, young Canadians express criticism over the deficiencies of the social system we are offering them: this criticism had to do with the difficulties facing our native people; with a number of laws the enforcement of which is wronging those who are weak and ignorant; with an international community that accepts killing and destroying as the normal course of event and lastly, with parliamentary and government institutions that do not answer the needs of the Canadians as efficiently as they should. This criticism was not just made random, in a disorderly way; often it was voiced—and we welcome the fact—by political bodies the role of which is precisely, in a democratic society, to provide for the necessary changes. Every member of the house should take at heart to ensure the fruitful participation of our young people in the political life of our country.

[English]

This summer, too, we have all watched, even while accepting the optimistic forecasts of Canada's economic future, the debilitating effects of an inflation which has taken root in
[Mr. Trudeau.]

all western countries and which no government individually has so far been able adequately to control. All hon. members have returned here with the determination to ease these problems and in so doing illustrate once again the important role which parliament plays in the life of Canada.

The leaders of the opposition parties have had much to say about the government's alleged failure to act in controlling spending. They have also had much to say every time we have acted. This kind of inconsistent, automatic criticism prompts me to remind them that the credibility gap is not a phenomenon peculiar only to other countries.

In addition to these activities which we have witnessed, Mr. Speaker, there have been some aspects of Canadian life which we have felt more than seen. Of these, the most evident, and undoubtedly the most important, is the spirit of tolerance and goodwill that is an invaluable Canadian characteristic. Canadians take for granted what so many persons elsewhere seek and envy: human relationships that, by and large, accept without question differences in colour or origin or language.

I stated on July 1 that we seldom reflect how fortunate we are in this country that there is a notable absence of bigotry and prejudice. Events of the past few weeks, however, have demonstrated that we cannot afford to assume smugly that these hateful characteristics are strangers to Canada and are always absent. Nevertheless, if all Canadians are not yet able to live in dignity, by far the greater number of those who are not able to do so suffer from indifference—not from hate; from neglect, not from prejudice. Not here do we find repression clothed in the guise of liberty, or violence tolerated in the name of law and order. This spirit of tolerance is our greatest gift, Mr. Speaker; we must cherish it and never take it for granted. Against it we can judge our stature as a country and as a people.

But tolerance is of benefit only if it remains a positive force. It is evil if it becomes an excuse for inaction or lack of care. Canadians must never become tolerant of poverty, of lawlessness, of suffering. Through their representatives in this place they must continue to make known their desire to share in the task of eliminating these evils, and we here must not flag in our attempts to find solutions.

Our primary responsibility, Mr. Speaker, is to the people of Canada. But the efforts of Parliament to produce a better life must not