

The Address—Mr. Stanfield

reply to the Speech from the Throne, but whether I should explore all these matters through a more detailed statement on motions is perhaps something that I will have to judge later.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Wednesday, February 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. Stollery for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to associate myself with the tributes paid by the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery) and the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) to His Excellency the Governor General and Her Excellency, and to extend to the Governor General and his wife the best wishes of the members of my party.

I would also like to extend our greetings to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of this country, because to whatever extent the good fortune of the country is measured by the calibre of the people who devote their working years to the public service, then to the fullest of that extent Canada is indeed a most fortunate country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the treasury benches will not take that remark too personally.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): That's a very nice compliment.

Mr. Sharp: Just continue in the same vein.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stanfield: At the beginning of this new session, I would like to salute you, Mr. Speaker, and assure you of our sincere co-operation in carrying on satisfactory proceedings in the House. You have before you an official opposition more vigorous than ever—especially since our Quebec membership has increased by 50 per cent since Tuesday—and especially determined to play fully its parliamentary role not only as a critic of the government but also as a potential government. And since the past is a guarantee for the future, we rely greatly on your fairness and usual impartiality to enable us to perform our duty in all its rigour.

Before coming to the heart of the matter, allow me, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the mover and seconder, the hon. members for Spadina and Sherbrooke (Messrs. Stollery and Pelletier). They have brilliantly discharged a difficult task even to the extent that their interventions were almost more significant than the main paper itself.

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

[*English*]

Sir, we meet at this time under the threat of a very severe dislocation of the world's economy, a threat to economic stability and economic progress arising from restrictions placed on the export of oil by some oil producing countries and from enormous balance of payments problems created by very substantial increases in the price of crude oil. These balance of payments problems are faced by most oil consuming countries. This situation poses great problems not only for the world but for our own country. Unless ways can be developed, through collective action, to enable countries to continue policies of reasonable growth, country after country may be forced to retrench, to slow down in order to avoid collapse leading quite possibly to difficulties for trading partners and therefore a reaction in our own economic conditions in Canada and, at worst, leading to a general, worldwide economic depression.

● (1510)

This is a severe problem for developed countries, but underdeveloped countries which must import their energy are threatened with catastrophe. This matter is mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I was happy to see it there, but I sensed nothing in the throne speech indicating the depth of concern that I believe this impending or possible catastrophe should evoke. Nor did I see any indication of any proposals to meet the horrendous problems for the relatively poor countries which must import their energy or, indeed, for developed countries which are faced with substantial threats of dislocation.

I suggest that this problem facing developed countries which are large importers of energy, and underdeveloped countries which must rely on external sources of energy, presents the greatest challenge to western leadership that the western world has faced since the end of World War II.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I am not happy to say that it is difficult to feel confident that such leadership exists today. I do not expect Canada to supply all the answers or to take all the initiatives, but we are in a rather unique position to show leadership. Because individuals and companies have found petroleum in Canada in sufficient quantities to make us, for the time being at least, relatively independent in the sense that we export about as much as we import, we are in a position of relative independence and therefore are in a position to be somewhat objective and to offer leadership in that sense.

I am not sure that we are doing very much more than being smug. I hope to hear in this House very shortly definite statements by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) and by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) as to precisely what Canada is proposing by way of collective action to assure stability and, indeed, continued progress in trade among developed countries, and precisely what we are proposing to head off these tremendous problems faced by underdeveloped countries which must import oil at vastly increased prices. I would have more confidence in Canada's contribution toward reducing these economic problems if I saw more evidence that the government had a deeper understanding of our domes-