

*The Address—Mr. Lachance*

federal government to make agreements, the minister says we must wait until there is a consensus of the provinces. That is an interesting word. It was not defined by the minister as to whether it means two or three, the majority, or all of the provinces. But I submit it casts a very bad light back on the kind of thing done in the debate on medicare when in two cases we got amendments which the government is now apparently prepared to do nothing about.

In the one case there was an amendment to make it possible to bring the date forward. We have had no action on that. In the other case there was an amendment to make it possible to bring in paramedical services even if only one province requested them. Now the government says there must be a consensus. I understand that a number of the provinces, three or perhaps four, have already requested that certain branches of optometry and perhaps other services be included in the provisions of the Medical Care Act, and I urge that the government realize that these are things that ought to be done because our people need them. They also ought to be done to demonstrate the good faith in which we assumed the government was acting when it agreed to these amendments during debate on the legislation last year.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, these things, the problems of old age pensioners and war veterans allowance recipients, of superannuated civil servants, of retired C.N.R. pensioners, and of people needing medicare, are with us here and now. Many are the problems of old people who helped bring Canada through to the conclusion of its first century. While it is fine to be talking about the future, about the next few decades, about the glorious era of 2067, the responsibility of this parliament is not only to do some thinking and some planning now to cope with the problems of the future, but it is also its responsibility to meet the needs of the people who are with us here and now, and I call for action on the part of the government right now on the questions of a social nature about which I have spoken.

● (4:10 p.m.)

I return to the first plea I made, namely, that over this week end the Prime Minister consider favourably the suggestion that he call together the leaders of the various parties of this house with a view to reaching agreement so that by passing a motion early next week this parliament can speak to the world with a clear voice in expressing our concern that there be an end to the war in Viet Nam,

that there be sanity in international affairs, so that there might be a world for our children and those who come after them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Georges C. Lachance (Lafontaine):** Mr. Speaker, to start with, my first words will be directed to the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, the hon. members for Burin-Burgeo and Nicolet-Yamaska (Messrs. Jamieson and Côté).

Those two hon. members did not only present works of art but their speeches were also quite interesting and carefully prepared. They are experts in their respective fields, the mover in the media of communication and the seconder in the field of agriculture. I think that the government should call more often on our experts in the House of Commons, so that our bills might be better prepared and better suited to the needs of the Canadian people. Therefore, they do deserve our sincere congratulations.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with several points, in the few minutes available to me during the debate on the address. I do not intend to deal with them according to their relative importance, because all these problems are in my mind of the utmost importance, whatever they may be.

Nevertheless, I think that today in Geneva the representatives of the various countries are gathered to deal with the customs tariff under GATT. This is what is called the Kennedy Round. Well, I think this is a most important day for world trade and the discussions now taking place are crucial for the outcome of this meeting.

I hope that every member of this house wishes that this meeting should succeed. The time allowed for completion of the discussions will expire in the near future, unless those believe that this is one of the greatest means to raise the standard of living of mankind. concerned agree to go on.

I am a firm believer in free trade, in unfettered commerce throughout the world, and I know that our trade minister (Mr. Winters) is in Geneva, and that his experience will serve the cause and help enlighten those who are slow to understand that these talks must achieve some results.

Many questions were touched upon in the speech from the throne Mr. Speaker. It is claimed that it lacks the depth of the preceding one. To my mind, Mr. Speaker, it may be felt that the government after accomplishing