

Speech from the Throne

moted to National Defence. In my opinion he was not promoted; he was rescued. And we have the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) saying he was promoted. Mr. Speaker, he wasn't promoted; he was sacrificed. The same applies to the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs, who made so many bad friends with the competition bill. He, too, in a sense was rescued, and his successor was sacrificed. I think the shufflees recognize the real positions in which they find themselves.

The government stands by its record of tax reform. Members of the government say that it meets with the approval of the majority of the Canadian people. If the tax reform was so good and so well accepted by the Canadian people, why was the minister who introduced it not left in his post for the final test? Why was he rescued and spirited away to the non-controversial position of National Defence? This is the real meaning of a cabinet shuffle. While it may be presented to the Canadian people as something in their interest, it is nothing more or less than political strategy to save some ministers and sacrifice others. Is it real concern? No! But there is no question about the political strategy.

Mr. Foster: Did somebody say "Burgess"?

Mr. Peddle: Burgess doesn't enter into this situation, Mr. Speaker. He is being properly dealt with.

Today we have the worst unemployment situation that the country has ever known. Unemployment is rampant. Upwards of 8 per cent of the Canadian work force is unemployed. But what is the pet subject of the government? Despite the tragic unemployment situation, members of the government feel they have to have an issue to divert the minds of the people from unemployment. So what do they come up with? Where is their emphasis now? It is on Canadian nationalism.

They have to have something to stir the Canadian people up, and so they say we have got to redeem ourselves from United States economic domination. Why don't they realize that we have 8 per cent unemployment, and that that type of an issue, in all common sense, must wait until we have taken care of some of the real priorities? They talk about economic domination and the jobs created in Canada as a result of American investment. Do they want the unemployment rate to double to 14 per cent or even 20 per cent? The people who are unemployed and those who recognize the terrible unemployment situation will not appreciate that very much.

• (1640)

When I heard the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, I was embarrassed for His Excellency who had to read it. The speech confirms my suspicion that the Prime Minister is totally out of touch with the needs of the people. There is no question about that in my mind. The speech indicates that unemployment is of great concern. Bully for the government—what an admission! With a federal election imminent hon. members opposite are trying to justify what has happened in this country over the last four years. I cannot say that I blame them for trying, politics being what it is.

An hon. Member: It has been a disaster.

Mr. Peddle: But I blame the Canadian people if they are duped in the coming election as they were duped in 1968.

Now, I should like to touch on another subject and perhaps it will not be too long before I hear cries of "bigot" from the other side. The moment one raises the question of bilingualism and biculturalism, the long finger points and there is the cry of "bigot". I am not a bigot and I do not want to be called one, but I reserve the right to raise the question.

Mr. Dinsdale: You are a Canadian.

Mr. Peddle: A week or two ago a question was raised by the Premier of British Columbia, and the reaction of the Prime Minister was so great that his finger almost stretched from here to British Columbia as he cried "bigot". I do not think the comment was necessarily bigoted and I do not think that what I have said is bigoted. There is no bigotry in me. In my 12 years or so in public life I have always been subjected to majorities—religious majorities, political majorities, racial and every other kind of majority. When I was running in municipal and provincial politics, if someone had suggested to my opponent that he stress that he could get a better deal for them because he was one of them, there would not have been anything wrong with that. I would not say those people were bigots. What is wrong with people exercising their majority?

At the risk of being labelled a bigot, I cannot help feeling that for the past number of years the tail has been wagging the dog in this country and that is not a good situation. People who know more about this than I do know that minorities are inclined to be prejudiced. If the English speaking people of Canada were in the minority today, and I was one of that minority, I honestly feel I would be prejudiced because that is the way with minorities. But that is no good reason for the majority being afraid of somebody pointing the finger at them and calling them bigots. The big weakness of the majority in this country is that they have this fear. They know whether they are bigots and I know whether I am, but I defy anybody to say that I am.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peddle: Mr. Speaker, I think there is a great danger of the majority in this country or any other becoming too magnanimous. This is the situation in the United States where the majority has become afraid of the minority pointing its finger and saying "Be careful you don't become a bigot". They should not feel that way. Personally, I have no bigotry. If I order a hamburger in a restaurant I do not care whether I order in English or French. If it were a Chinese restaurant and I knew Chinese I would order it in Chinese—just as long as I got the hamburger. But a lot of people think that if you go to a Chinese restaurant you should order in Chinese and if you go to a French restaurant you should order in French, whether the staff speaks the language or not. I believe that is nonsense.

I agree that there is a difference in the temperament of people, but I think this aspect is being exploited. I really believe that the temperament of the different racial origins of Canada is being exploited by irresponsible politi-