

*The Address—Mr. Honey*

two gentlemen struck a theme which has been common throughout the speeches in this debate, and was most recently mentioned by the hon. member who preceded me. I refer to the theme of Canadian unity, and the necessity that all hon. members and all Canadians speak with reasonableness and moderation as we consider the difficult days that may lie ahead of us in the next two or three years.

I wish to refer for a moment to the remarks of the hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Cote), who said in effect that he wanted to assert to the country that the voice of the extremists, even though it receives much publicity, is not the voice of the vast majority of Quebecers. The hon. member went on to say that in this controversy over national unity, everyone's opinion is to be respected, even that of the extremists. For, he said, it is not in abusing them that we shall make them change their minds; it is up to us to give them concrete evidence that their theory is wrong.

Then the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. Basford), who seconded the motion, reciprocated the sentiment of the mover when he said that none of us came here to take part in the breaking up of a nation. He said we should have pride in Canada, pride in the 96 years of nation building which has gone before, and pride in the future that lies ahead for Canada. I am pleased this theme was struck by the mover and seconder of the address, and it has been followed by and large by all hon. members. I for one, Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members, am dedicated to the proposition that the unity of the nation must be preserved and strengthened, and I am dedicated to the proposition that no task which will direct us to that end is too minute to overlook and no task is too large to undertake.

For a few minutes I would like to deal with some of the substantive aspects of the throne speech; and initially, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct your attention to the undertaking of the government given in that speech, and subsequently confirmed and elaborated on by the Prime Minister, with respect to the Canada pension plan. I welcome the statement in the throne speech dealing with it, and also the statement of the Prime Minister, who has indicated that this house will be asked to move ahead expeditiously with that legislation.

We have a responsibility and a duty to go ahead with it. I make this point as kindly as I know how, that we have heard from the premier of Ontario that he has a responsibility to those in his province who are participating in private pension plans. Those

people constitute something like 30 per cent of the population of Ontario, and I believe this figure applies to all Canada; but the government has a responsibility in this chamber to the other 70 per cent of the people who have no pension plans, and I want to emphasize that we must approach this legislation fully cognizant of the fact that we have a duty to perform. Of course, while we must do this reasonably, we must also approach it in a spirit of co-operation and intelligence. I do not suggest that any particular party has a monopoly on virtue or knowledge. This is something which will require the best that all minds can contribute in order to do the job.

On more than one occasion the Prime Minister has indicated that when this legislation is introduced it will be referred to a special committee of the house, a forum in which the details of the legislation will be worked out, where we may hear those who are in favour and those who are opposed. This will be the real test of the legislation and the test of the hon. members who compose that committee.

No useful purpose is served by editorials such as that which appeared in this morning's *Globe and Mail*, which said that this special committee would be "packed with a majority of government supporters". Hon. members and others who are acquainted with this parliament know that committees, whether special or standing, do not in fact have a majority of government supporters, let alone being packed with a majority of government supporters. That editorial casts a doubt on the sincerity and the ability of hon. members of the house to deal intelligently with the Canada pension plan. It does a disservice to the main objective which all of us have in this chamber, that is, to obtain the best legislation, and to do this in the spirit of co-operation with the provinces and in the spirit of accepting the best technical and professional advice we can get. With all the assistance and co-operation we can get, then we can come up with a pension plan that will do justice to the people of Canada and to this house.

I also welcome the announcement in the throne speech of the program for student loan assistance. I quite appreciate, as has been already mentioned in this debate, that members of the government have said over and over again that this party is committed to a program for a parliament, and while at times we may be a bit impatient to see more items of legislation announced in the throne speech we must realize that this parliament, as the Prime Minister said on Thursday, is in its second session and should in all probability