

The Address—Mr. Wagner

head of the government and the leader of the official opposition? I also extend greetings to the mover (Mr. Blais), and the seconder (Mr. Blaker).

Mr. Speaker, I realize that I am sitting in the Canadian Parliament at a time when parliamentary government is living through a unique period of its history where it must serve the prime interests of the Canadian people rather than the electoral designs of political parties.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is a privilege for me, as member for Saint-Hyacinthe, to represent with my Quebec colleagues the aspirations of that province in the Canadian Parliament and this when all Canadians, from whatever province or region, are precisely yearning for unity in diversity, common ideals which respect the characteristics of all partners.

I would have liked so much, Mr. Speaker, to speak today about the position of our party concerning the government platform. However, the generalities of the Speech from the Throne, stamped with fine intents and pious hopes, do not prompt me to improve upon the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau).

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to apologize for what I am going to say this morning. Truth has its own rights and so has justice.

I am not very proud of the behaviour shown by some hon. members in this House. Last Monday, I was surprised by the nature and the tone of the speech of the Prime Minister. He was not the man I knew before nor the writer I read once. Listening to him and embarrassed by his words, I remembered an article he wrote earlier in his career in the 56th issue of *Cité Libre*, in April 1963. This article is entitled:

Pearson or the abdication of the mind.

The head of the government said then:

The political philosophy of the Liberal party is quite simple: say anything, think of anything or, better still, do not think of anything at all, but bring us into power because we are the ones who can govern you best.

Ten years later, we hear the echo: "Say anything, but bring us into power".

Mr. Speaker, unaware of what was in store for him, the hon. member for Mount Royal wrote concerning those who did not dare criticize the then Liberal leader, and I quote:

They recognize that the leader of the Liberal party was a little rash about changing the platform of the party, but they feel that this is not the time . . . to condemn the leader and divide the party.

Further on, one can read:

The Liberals believe that power is their own property.

Mr. Speaker, this is how the Liberal party had been stigmatized by its present leader. So I say, with reason, the more it changes, the more it remains unchanged.

This desire of the present government to hang on to power at all cost makes me say that its minority position uncovers its political immorality.

Mr. Speaker, the incredible remarks that the head of this government and the leader of the Social Credit party (Mr. Caouette) have made last Monday have simply made me sick.

[Mr. Wagner.]

Why did we have to listen to these two awkward and ridiculous representations about Canadian unity, so called by some people, awkward and ridiculous representations according to the most objective observers, to editorialists and even to the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Lewis)? They were made to conceal their ineptness to deal with and solve now the real problems, that is economic inequalities which affect the Canadian people.

It was not even clever to resort to such tactics of diversion, Mr. Speaker. I want to state clearly that I had to control myself not to intervene and rise on a question of privilege. Today, I appeal to the pride of the people from Quebec and to the dignity of all Canadians so that they no longer tolerate such situations and I shall keep on doing it.

[English]

As a member of this House from the province of Quebec, I note how often and with what ease the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) readily employs distortion to make debating points which could not otherwise stand on their own. Might I give one illustration? On Monday, the Prime Minister referred to an editorial published in the *Vancouver Sun* of November 3, 1972. The section from which he quoted was put this way in the original editorial:

A minority government headed by Mr. Trudeau is almost certain to be defeated in parliament within a matter of months with a further loss of party prestige. The most important prospect, however, is that in the meantime frustrated English-speaking Canadians will feel that their wishes as expressed at the polls last Monday are being thwarted on a constitutional technicality by a party that owes fundamental political allegiance to Quebec.

• (1240)

The editorial writer puts that particular view forward as a prospect, and that is the precise word he uses, "prospect". The Prime Minister, in quoting from the editorial on Monday, did not include that part about the prospect.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Wagner: He began his quotation in this way, and I quote this time from *Hansard* of January 8 at page 53:—frustrated English-speaking Canadians will feel that their wishes as expressed—

It is abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister, by taking this sentence out of its original context as a prospect, has changed the whole meaning of that section of the editorial. The newspaper assesses this as a mischievous reading of its real position, and I agree with that assessment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wagner: Of course, my purpose in covering this matter is not to defend the editorial integrity of the *Vancouver Sun*. I use it as an illustration, I think a particularly emphatic illustration, of how the Prime Minister is prepared to distort material that is unfavourable to his position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wagner: One has to ask why the Prime Minister indulges in this kind of distortion. The *Vancouver Sun* thinks it is mischief, but in view of the serious stakes in