

the dignity and courage with which she is assisting her husband and serving all Canada.

[English]

I should like also, naturally, to express my congratulations to the hon. member for Restigouche (Mr. Harquail) and to the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemont (Mr. Lachance) for their contributions in opening this debate. I cannot in all conscience wish them well in future parliamentary careers but I do wish them success in what remains of their present parliamentary careers.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my Progressive Conservative colleagues, I would like to point out that we will miss in this debate the active presence of the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette). We deplore the illness afflicting our colleague, but we are sure that he will face that inconvenience with the same pugnacious spirit which he has always shown in the House. The same spirit which has enabled him to uphold untiringly federalism at a time when his position was not always overly popular.

● (1510)

[English]

I should at the outset take note of the changes that have occurred in the ministry since parliament rose for the summer.

Mr. Fairweather: Like an elastic band.

Mr. Clark: As my colleague from Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) points out, like an elastic band. I was going to speak of the changes in the past tense but we, like the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), look forward to tomorrow.

If one measures progress by sheer velocity of change, I guess we would have to call this most recent cabinet change a change for the better. For myself, I find more truth in the assessment of my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), who remarked that he knew of no instance where the mere act of changing the pallbearers served to revive the corpse!

[Translation]

The opposition sincerely regrets that the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) has left the Cabinet. We did not always approve his ideas, but we knew where his heart was. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this characteristic is not applicable to all members of the Cabinet.

[English]

I should as well pay my respects to two other former ministers, the hon. members for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp) and Westmount (Mr. Drury). Both have laboured long and, to be fair and to give them their due, have laboured with considerable distinction in the public service of their country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Address—Mr. J. Clark

Mr. Clark: I should say to the hon. member for Westmount that, while we may have questioned his frankness earlier this year in regard to his dealings with members of the bench, I find it refreshing that he is now at least prepared to admit that he cannot resign his seat for fear of his party losing a by-election.

Naturally I want to congratulate the new ministers on their appointments, both those who took over full portfolios and those whose status is more tenuous or uncertain. I am particularly pleased that the government followed our lead in recognizing the importance of small business and the importance of fitness and amateur sport in Canada.

I do not think that it is unfair to the new ministers to suggest to them or to the House that the Prime Minister appears to have made their appointments with his eye as much to the electoral map as to other considerations, including considerations such as proven talent and experience. Even before this morning the Prime Minister and his advisers had clearly written off western Canada, so the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. McIsaac) is passed over despite his experience. The Prime Minister appears to be a little less clear as to whether or not British Columbia is fighting ground, so he has allotted B.C. one minister and three "half ministers". In regard to one of those, Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat surprised last night, when speaking to the new Minister of State responsible for small business affairs, to learn that his first visit outside of Canada in the interests of developing small business policy was going to be to the Soviet Union.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: He now assures me that this is in relation to other responsibilities that he has, but I think that it will awaken some concern among Canadians who have been watching the record of the government as to what precisely is the source of its policy regarding small entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Now tell us about your trip to Rome.

Mr. Clark: The hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay), who hopes by raising his voice to raise his hopes, asks about my trip to Rome. I must disappoint him by telling him that at no time during my trip to Rome did his name come up.

This is a government whose period in office is measured not by elections or by parliaments but by advertising slogans. From the "Just Society" to "The Land is Strong", we now have entered into the area of "Operation Justification". If the goal is to make the people of Canada believe in this government, then we, Sir, are not talking about an operation; we are talking about wholesale surgery.

I was interested to read reports of the Prime Minister's speech in Toronto the other day. That was his speech to the faithful; at least, there were some faithful reported to be there when it began. In that speech the Prime Minister lamented the state of the nation. He even lamented the state of the Liberal