

The Address—Mr. John Turner

only thing that he really kept from the platform of two years ago.

If the message is not getting through to the Prime Minister from his pollsters, I hope he listens to the message given to him by the voters of Saint-Maurice and Pembina on Monday. When he and his advisers sit down and analyse the results of those by-elections they will see that that support was cut in half. I believe that reflects the view that in just two short years the Government has forced Canadians to grow weary of a Government that lumps from scandal to scandal, a Government that is preoccupied with its own image and polls and is unable to present to the country a clear and consistent direction.

This new Throne Speech is based upon what the Prime Minister loves to term the four pillars: national reconciliation, economic renewal, social justice and constructive internationalism. The problem is that we have heard it all before. We heard it during the election campaign and we heard it in the first Throne Speech. Canadians are rightly asking why they should trust the Government now. They see words like "national reconciliation" coming from the same person who called strikers in Alberta separatists. They see words like "economic renewal" coming from the same Government which has dramatically cut its aid to the regions of the country and abandoned farmers, fishermen and miners. They see words like "social justice" coming from the same Government that has drastically cut social programs when it once called them a sacred trust. It tried to deindex the old age pension and succeeded in deindexing the family allowance. The Government shattered those commitments.

Canadians see words like "constructive internationalism" from the same people who now have gone into locked step with the current U.S. administration on almost every issue. The expression used to be that when the U.S. sneezes Canada catches cold. That has been given a whole new interpretation under this Government. It seems that when Ronald Reagan has a drug problem Canada gets an epidemic.

The Prime Minister should not wonder if Canadians are cynical about the latest attempt to sell them a new image.

We understand that part of the strategy is to keep the Prime Minister under control, to keep him out of the House. It is called damage control. The theory is that he will do less harm to his Government if he is out on the road doing "what he does best"—we are still waiting to see what that is—than he would be if he was in the House of Commons. Perhaps the events of the last two weeks will force the Prime Minister's advisers to reverse that strategy. Some observers have even come to the conclusion that he is running for my job as Leader of the Opposition. Why not? Everyone else is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): All I can say to the Prime Minister is that he is my favourite candidate and I am pulling for him to be the next Leader of the Opposition.

As much as I respect the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) and wish him well in his new role, I was not encouraged by his intervention this morning to try to curtail your discretion, Mr. Speaker. We will vigorously resist any attempt to bridle this House on either side. We rely on your judgment because you are the collective decision of the House and we will stand with you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): However, the Government House Leader, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister, ought never to confuse those two roles. When he speaks as Deputy Prime Minister, we will listen. He is the Government representative, the chief operating officer, the Prime Minister calls him. When he is in the Chamber as House Leader he is trying to achieve a better reconciliation, a better tone and a better mood. He will have a great responsibility in setting that mood and I hope he will not forget that.

• (12:30)

However, despite the new exaltation of his role, and he is entitled to relish it, he is not the Prime Minister. Canadians did not elect him to be Prime Minister and the office and responsibility of the Prime Minister cannot be delegated in this House or in the country. We are going to ensure that the Prime Minister is here to answer on behalf of the Government, despite the high sounding title of the Deputy Prime Minister. This House is the forum of the nation. It cannot be bypassed and we will see, to the best of our ability, that the Prime Minister remains accountable to this Chamber and, through the Chamber, to the people of Canada.

The Prime Minister said: "We do the big things well. We do some of the small things poorly". That is how the Prime Minister looks at his Government's record in mid-term. What were the small things? What were the big things? We happen to think that some of the small things, on which the Prime Minister admits failure, happen to count for a lot. We do not think they are that small.

We do not think, to begin with, that trust and integrity in government is that small. The Minister of National Defence is forced to resign in questionable circumstances. Is that small? The Hatfield affair, the administration of justice thrown into disrepute, is that small, Mr. Speaker?

The former Minister of Regional Economic Expansion is accused of violating the conflict of interest rules and is now under inquiry. Yet he was defended by the Prime Minister and the former Deputy Prime Minister for weeks in this House by way of stonewalling. Is that a small thing? The former Deputy Prime Minister himself admitted to this House that he tapped Liberal caucuses some years ago. Is that a small thing?

The bungling of two Ministers precipitated not one but two bankruptcies in our banking system costing the taxpayers over a billion dollars, and the repercussions are still being felt. The Continental Bank had to be bailed out yesterday because of a