

The Address—Mr. Mongrain

Speaker, I had the surprise of my life when the terminal door opened and the Prime Minister walked in. I was walking in front of him. The crowd exploded; there was a terrific burst and all these people surged toward us. I like to think that I am rather strong and well used to taking care of myself, but the crowd swept us over the Prime Minister and myself at least ten feet, inside the air terminal. It was the same thing during the whole trip, at Trois-Rivières-Ouest, at Trois-Rivières and at Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

During that whole evening, I dreaded accidents and I am still amazed that, miraculously, the Prime Minister's caravan did not run over some of the pedestrians surging in a crowd near the cars, throwing themselves in front of them.

I have seen something still more extraordinary—something I had never seen anywhere, Mr. Speaker. We had organized the beginning of a soft ball match at Cap-de-la-Madeleine and the right hon. Prime Minister was to be the batter; the present Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) acted as pitcher and I was the catcher. I had asked the police to let nobody come in on the field. A four-foot steel fence surrounds that field and the police had succeeded in keeping away the crowd that was spreading out in the adjoining streets, up to the moment when the Prime Minister struck the first ball, sending it into the field. Then I saw 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and even 20 year old boys jump over the fence to shake hands with the Prime Minister.

I witnessed an even more extraordinary sight. I saw some respectable matrons of 40, 45 and 50 years of age—perhaps they were Ladies of St. Ann—leap over the fence just to shake hands with the Prime Minister.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that such a spontaneous, enthusiastic and genuine outburst, from Victoria to St. Johns, Newfoundland, is indeed a proof that Canadians, truly and sincerely feel that they found the leader they needed, and who will be able, together with his team to run the country in its best interests.

How will the just society come about? I will say it again to the gentlemen of the opposition: by and by, as circumstances permit and provided the opposition does not cause obstruction, legislation will be introduced by those entrusted with the task. However, co-operation will evidently be required from everybody and everyone will have to do his share.

[Mr. Mongrain.]

In my view, the idea being spread around that everything should come from the government is childish and is not serious. I have tried, Mr. Speaker, to make an analysis of some sort, to find out what it would cost the government if it granted everything that members of the opposition have requested since the beginning of the debate. The total I have come to is of the order of \$2 billion and a half to \$3 billion. I am sure that if the government were to grant all that, the members of the opposition would be the first ones to say: it does not make sense, taxes will rise. I understand that the opposition feels that such and such a thing should have priority over others, but priorities are not all alike. Apparently all requests claim first priority. Therefore, when there is no consensus, it is up to the government to make a choice, because it carries the responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this afternoon to touch on one or two subjects more specifically. We hear comments about a just society and the suggestion that one basic condition is necessary to achieve a just society: that is increased national productivity. What is the meaning of productivity? I will venture my own definition: it is the output of manual or intellectual effort by all Canadians who can and want to work. The sum total of all these efforts constitutes the national income with which people can live and pay taxes.

Now I would like to quote from a speech made in this house by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) the hon. member for Verdun. These very words are to be found on page 252 of *Hansard*:

Both parties—

That is management and labour.

—must understand that the prosperity of this great country depends on the productivity of our secondary industries; and productivity, I repeat, depends on co-operation between management and labour, and a mutual respect for each other's particular problems.

I should like to emphasize this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that our productivity has declined for all sorts of reasons. First of all, of course, there was the unemployment problem, which the government is now trying to solve by measures which seem to me quite realistic and which should give results sooner or later. Then there was also the great number of strikes which are being blamed on the government but which occurred in most cases without the government being able to intervene; it is precisely this point to which I should like to draw the attention of all my colleagues and of the whole Canadian people.