

The Address—Mr. Jelinek

It is doubtful whether citizens seeking more government services are really consciously aware that they are thereby demanding high taxation.

At present there are over 443,000 federal government employees. There are some 1.4 million people employed at all levels of government, and in fact one out of every seven Canadian workers is employed by some level of government. There has been no levelling off at the federal level, as promised by the Prime Minister some time ago. I suppose we are getting used to his promises that are never kept. Excessive government spending and empire building are the major causes of internal inflation, as we have said, and this situation can no longer be tolerated.

These are some of the things that one would have expected the Prime Minister to deal with in his initial address to this thirtieth parliament. But what did we hear? What subjects did the Prime Minister dwell on at length and consider so crucial? What does the Prime Minister always talk about when he wishes to shroud his administration's inability to cope with the real issues? Bilingualism, of course. And there is nothing wrong with bilingualism. But my God, surely with the serious problems facing Canada today, the fact that the Prime Minister considers bilingualism the most critical issue is completely beyond comprehension. But then, what better way to avoid the real issues facing this country than to create and talk about false ones?

I wonder whether any member of this House except the Prime Minister, or anyone in Canada believes that bilingualism rates more priority at this time for more government action than inflation or unemployment? Has bilingualism driven up the cost of food? Has bilingualism affected production in this country? Has bilingualism created unemployment? Or, indeed, has bilingualism affected our critical housing situation? On the one hand, we have a Prime Minister espousing the virtues of bilingualism for Canada. On the other hand, we have a Prime Minister who is reluctant to protect the rights of the English minority in Quebec by reversing that province's controversial, if not unconstitutional, Bill 22.

● (1410)

After spending hundreds of millions of dollars on bilingualism, are we now to look at nine bilingual provinces accepting bilingualism, and one province rejecting it? I wonder how the Prime Minister would have reacted had the province of Ontario, for example, legislated its own Bill 22 in respect of English. The fact is that the province of Ontario has recently taken the very responsible step of initiating French-language courses from kindergarten on. For the Prime Minister to say that Francophones of this country are being treated unfairly by the rest of Canada is, quite simply, ridiculous.

Let us consider, for example, some of the federal funds that were allocated as recently as last year. Under the Opportunities for Youth Program the province of Quebec received \$28.5 million, compared with Ontario's \$15.5 million, with an over-all Canadian total of \$68 million. That represents nearly 50 per cent for Quebec alone—hardly an anti-Quebec situation.

Let us consider, also, Local Initiatives Program grants, of which Quebec received \$80 million and Ontario only \$31

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million out of a total Canadian allotment of \$202 million. Again, that is hardly anti-Quebec. The DREE figures are equally slanted in favour of that province and are also a matter of record.

I for one, and I believe there are millions of others in this country, am becoming sick and tired of the constant pressure by this government to cater at every turn to la belle province. I am not an English Canadian. I am not a French Canadian either. I am simply a Canadian, and I am proud of it. As some members know, I was born behind the iron curtain and escaped with my family at an early age to come to this great country, a country full of promise, opportunity and freedom. That is something we did not, and do not, have back in Czechoslovakia. I do not like the idea of the possibility of a language curtain being erected in this country, right under our noses, with the prodding of the Prime Minister. It distresses me to find this country divided by language instead of united by language.

Let me make it very clear that by no means am I against bilingualism. As a matter of fact, I would be more than happy to see more Canadians speaking both languages. I am presently taking French classes and therefore hope to add that language to the three I already speak. The answer, then, does not lie in forcing bilingualism upon any person or group of persons but, rather, by incorporating language training into the earliest grades of our school systems. As long as bills, such as that passed in Quebec, to legislate against any minority are allowed by the federal government to stand, our country will continue to be divided and will never show its truly great potential.

It is up to the elected officials to unite this country through co-operation, understanding and reasonable compromise, and not to permit any minority to suffer the injustice of restraint of freedom, whether that freedom be of religion, education or language. These principles are the very foundation of our country and must remain firm if we are to truly remain, as our national anthem states and, I hope, continues to state, "strong and free".

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I join those who have preceded me in this debate in extending sincere congratulations to Mr. Speaker on his elevation to the chair. I was one of those who had the duty of escorting him, resisting, to the chair. The way in which he has conducted our proceedings since then confirms my view that his modesty was excessive and that we should have overcome his resistance. I also wish to congratulate the two hon. members, the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Those two speeches were in the best parliamentary tradition and, I may add, in the authentic Liberal tradition of concern for one's fellow man.

All members of parliament, both newly elected, like the mover and seconder of the address in reply, and those who have been here for a number of years, are conscious of the unprecedented challenge presented to this institution to measure up to its responsibilities. In a system based on laws and not on power wielded by men, where government is carried on with the consent of the government, it is important that institutions possess the flexibility necessary to translate earlier individual concepts of human liberty into terms relative to today's mass societies and