

The Address—Mr. Jones

made against this government by the official opposition has been a reproach that it is lacking in leadership, that the Prime Minister and his ministers have failed to provide the necessary leadership in this country. Each member of the house, and each citizen of this country, will wish to decide for himself the confidence he places in this government. For myself I believe that the Prime Minister in his magnificent intervention in the Suez debate, and later in the debate on the address in reply, has shown himself to be a leader in the proper sense of leadership, that is leadership tempered by wisdom and long experience; and his understanding and vigour in the solution of the railway strike were, to me, considerable evidence of leadership.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs certainly needs no recommendations from any member of this house. His real leadership in the United Nations has earned the respect of all countries of the world, and he has shown himself to be a skilful and resourceful champion of peace in a manner that achieves practical results. Recently all of us were grieved and saddened at the very horrible events which occurred in Hungary, and in the press of this country there were admonitions and fears that the government would not respond properly to this challenge. I noticed recently that the editorial writers, from whom it is often difficult to extract any praise, have given the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration considerable praise and approval for the manner in which he has responded to this problem. Finally the Minister of National Health and Welfare has returned from a mission which again shows the manner in which the government is working to protect the interests of this country at home and abroad.

In the light of these few instances which I have cited, and there are others which could be mentioned, this government is certainly deserving of the confidence of the house; and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that I will not hit the headlines by announcing that I intend to support the government in all the votes precipitated by this debate.

Mr. O. L. Jones (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, like other speakers who have preceded me I must express my disappointment with the omissions from the throne speech of such important subjects as old age pensions, blind pensions, national health grants and so forth. But in spite of that I was rather pleased that it included one item which I was very anxious to see brought into effect; that is the extension of the Municipal Grants Act. I would like to compliment the minister for introducing it at this time. To my mind it meets a moral and legal

responsibility of the government which they have evaded for many years. In spite of that, I would like to offer one or two criticisms of the act. I hate to look a gift horse in the mouth but to my mind grants, while welcome, are not the solution to municipal-federal relations in this field.

Many years ago the union of British Columbia municipalities condemned grants in aid in general as a very unsatisfactory way to recompense a municipality for any service rendered, on the ground that those grants can and do vary from year to year, and they can be withheld or increased or decreased at the whim of the government. It almost reminds you of a mother trying to train her child by offering candy; a little more if he is better and a little less if he is not, and so on, forgetting that eventually he will become an adult.

That is the trouble with the federal government. The municipalities are just as capable of handling their own affairs and finances as the federal government is in its field. I feel, therefore, that the federal government is not the body which should determine the value of the service given by the municipalities. I do not suppose this grant will have any relationship to that service, because the federal government is not in a position to assess it. Therefore I suggest that the municipality should make the assessment. For that reason the federal government should take full responsibility for all municipal taxes on all federal properties within the municipalities, just as any other taxpayer or any businessman has to do. In this way the municipalities could budget properly which cannot be done with the uncertain type of grants in aid. The government then would be assuming a responsibility which to my mind they have been evading for many, many years.

I was going to talk a little about agriculture this afternoon. When I mention agriculture most of you will immediately think of wheat, but I wish to remind hon. members that there are other important branches of agriculture, such as cattle and dairying, and so on. There is also what the government seems to regard as the Cinderella of the farm groups, and I refer to the fruit and vegetable growing industries. The Cinderella group is waiting at the present moment to try on a glass slipper. It may prove that it will be the right size. I refer to the provincial royal commission which is starting to work in British Columbia at the present time. They are going to investigate the problems affecting the fruit and vegetable industry of that province, but not of the whole of Canada. I hope when the investigation is finished and