

Speech from the Throne

government is concerned. The just society has now been replaced, apparently, by an obsessional concern about isolation. I can understand this government's being concerned about isolation. It must be feeling plenty of it right now.

Much of the legislation proposed in the speech appears to be a hangover, holdover or leftover. "Heritage Canada" is something new. It is an interesting plan. The speech indicates that it is intended "to ensure the preservation of items and collections from Canada's past". Well, Mr. Speaker, the government certainly fits that description. Let us stuff the government for preservation, before it is too late.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I do not believe the people of Canada will take this government seriously. It is a bit much for an ostrich to try and pass itself off as a peacock.

The Prime Minister prides himself on being decisive. Strangely enough, he cannot seem to decide on what basis he wants the people of Canada to judge him at this stage in his career. At one moment he invites us to compare 1972 with 1968. In other words, he asks us to judge him on his record. Another time he says it is his future plans that count and that the past is not really important. I am inclined to agree that the record of past achievements is better forgotten if we consider the political welfare of the present government. This government has been in office under the present Prime Minister for almost four years.

• (1220)

I think we should take up the Prime Minister's invitation and look at what his government has done. I should devote a little time today to make a comparison between 1968 and 1972. I think it would be rather instructive for us all. After all, we have to judge the performance of this government in the coming weeks and months by its record in recent years. Four years ago the government suggested that it had a game plan. The first couple of years were to be for housecleaning. Then, we were to be treated with measures leading up to the just society. As I said a moment ago, there is no reference to the just society in the present Throne Speech. I guess that is not part of the new game plan. Indeed, the concepts of the just society seem to have become a political embarrassment to this government. The only game plan this government has is a political one; that is now very obvious to the Canadian people.

It is likewise obvious that from the very start this government has been living in a world of its own. It had slogans to be sure. The just society was one of those slogans, but the role of those slogans was not to describe the directions the government proposed to take. The role of those slogans was to hide the fact that the government was offering few policies of any relevance, and to hide the fact it had no co-ordinated program of economic management to give to the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: All too much of the government's game plan has been centered around a timetable, a timetable

[Mr. Stanfield.]

geared to re-election, not geared to the needs of the people of Canada.

I think the economy of Canada will be moving a little faster than last year. If that does happen, it certainly cannot be credited to the government's recent discovery of industrial strategy as a catch-phrase in the recent Speech from the Throne. The government's record has earned it the reputation of having a mechanistic view of the economy. The new Speech from the Throne tried to assure us that the government will be attempting to bring in proposals of tremendous importance to the future during the next few weeks. We are holding our breath. We are wondering if those new suggestions will equal in importance the fantastic breakthrough the Prime Minister achieved with the President of the United States last December.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: That is a pretty hard act to follow. When I first read the Speech from the Throne, I thought there was a mistake in spelling in the reference to industrial strategy because, from the behaviour of the government, I thought it was completely committed to industrial tragedy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: When I say I think the government is confused about its direction, I do not mean to suggest that the government has lacked ambition. The record is pretty clear on that.

[Translation]

The Tax reform in itself was a challenge. But when the white paper on tax reform was finally completed the government had reached new heights in the art of spreading confusion, uncertainty and dissatisfaction across the country.

For a short period of time, following pressures exerted by an irritated Canadian public, it was thought that the government would come to its senses. But its stubbornness had not been taken into account. With its new tax bill and its amendments to amendments amending the amendments that were constantly piling up over this monstrosity this government was determined to go all the way with its nonsense and confusion spreading.

[English]

The climax came when the government imposed closure to squelch further meaningful debate on its so called tax package.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: At the same time the government announced closure, it announced it was bringing in still more amendments to its own bill. This is one of the more incredible things this incredible government has perpetrated. In its wake, it left a tax jungle across this country and it left the small businessman, including the farmer, beset by a tax structure that means he will need an expert at his elbow every moment of the day when he is making a decision.

With regard to economic management, the record of the government since 1968 is abundantly clear. Inflation is