

I would also like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition in his new role. He is finding the same adept skill with the truth that he had as prime minister, and I am sure that that will persist, and I hope that he persists for many decades. I would also like to congratulate the Prime Minister on becoming the Prime Minister of this great country of ours, and I genuinely wish him well in the future.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Broadbent: Yesterday the Prime Minister announced in the Speech from the Throne his intention to introduce several measures this session. Some of these measures are good and we will support them. For instance, we are fully in favour of certain reforms which the new government intends to carry out to increase the powers of Parliament, as well as the freedom of information legislation it will introduce. For the time being, federal-provincial relations are certainly running a smoother course. No more confrontations with the provinces. We are fully in agreement with this new attitude.

[English]

So much for the good, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles: It didn't take very long.

Mr. Broadbent: Yesterday I had the pleasure of joining the Prime Minister and the leaders of the other parties in paying just tribute to a former prime minister, John Diefenbaker. On that occasion I said that one of the things which characterized Mr. Diefenbaker was his view of Canada that this was a land that was certainly much more than the sum of its regional parts. When I, later in the day, heard the Speech from the Throne, I must say that I got a very different vision indeed from the present government, from the present Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister said in the throne speech, and they are his words and the words of the cabinet, that they were given a mandate to change. I agree with that. I think that the people of Canada throughout the breadth of our land did indeed want a change. They gave the Conservative party an opportunity. Indeed, I suspect that there was good will from all Canadians, those who voted for the Prime Minister's party as well as those who voted for the Liberal party, for our party and the Creditiste party during the summer months. The question is how has that mandate been utilized? How has that mandate for change been recognized in reality during the four and a half months since the government took office?

We agree with all the good things there are in the Speech from the Throne, the removal of confrontation in our federal system and a genuine attention to the concerns of other regions in advance of decisions. I agree with the concern on a number of matters in which the Prime Minister has expressed his interest, but what has been lacking throughout the summer and in the throne speech yesterday has been a perspective of

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

our great country, that it is something other than a mere collection of regions. If I had to contrast the Speech from the Throne and the attitude of the present Prime Minister with that of Mr. Diefenbaker's, whereas Mr. Diefenbaker said that we were more than the sum of our parts, the attitude that I am getting from this government is that we are somewhat less than the sum of our parts.

I suggest that if the government continues in this direction Canada will be in great trouble in terms of disunity, for opposite reasons to those which produced the kind of disunity that we had during the tenure of his predecessor. It is one thing to argue for new attitudes, and attitudes count in politics profoundly, but it is quite another thing to have a direction in policy that will clearly have as its implication the dismemberment of a nation, which is devoid of a broader national perspective designed to draw people together.

It is my serious concern, Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian, that the new Conservative government has reacted, indeed, overreacted, to what was done by its predecessor. In saying that, I would like to spend a few minutes discussing the Leader of the Opposition and his comments. I am sure that the members on the government side as well as in my party listened with a combination of disbelief and horror as the current Leader of the Opposition tried to leave the impression, as he has done for years, that he and he alone speaks for Canada. We have heard it all before, the talk about *déjà vu*.

Where was the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal party when we lost our merchant marine off the east coast and west coast in recent history? Where were the Liberals in terms of a strategy in advance while the textile industry, shoe industry and the furniture industry in Quebec went, if not down the drain, down into serious trouble? Where were the Liberals, and where was the present Prime Minister, when Canadians on the prairies called for a speedy implementation of the Hall report that would have seen rail facilities, boxcars, and terminal ports provided for our western farmers? Where were the Liberals? Where were they in Cape Breton when serious capital investment in the steel industry there could have provided jobs instead of handouts? These are examples of what really produced disunity throughout our land, and it was the Liberal party, and only the Liberal party, that was in office.

If there has been one major source for the cause of problems which have occurred in our country, from British Columbia in the west to Newfoundland in the east, it has been connected with our natural resources. In all of my lifetime here, the party that sits at my right, with the exception of a few years, has stood by and, indeed, produced policies that saw us sell out our resources from region after region, instead of developing in this country a sound industrial nation based on those resources. That will come to be the most serious condemnation of the Liberal party in the history of our country. The present Leader of the Opposition cannot lecture the Prime Minister or anyone else on that subject.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!