

Supply—Mr. Gauthier

side of the house. It is nice to see them back in the House of Commons again. It is a pleasure always to come back. There are many in this house who have come back a number of times. There are new members in the House of Commons and, today, perhaps more than at any other time in our history we have the responsibility and the necessity because of the critical situation in this country of trying to give to those new members the inspiration that will reserve unto them the idealism that brought them here in the first place. We have seen that idealism die in the faces of so many who have come to the House of Commons over the years. I say to members on the government benches and on the back benches, do not let that idealism die in your faces because you have treasury benches that have taken unto themselves so many of the decisions that are being made on that side of the house. You have a responsibility not only to yourselves but to the people of Canada as well. If you utilize that responsibility in this house of minorities, your voice may be felt.

This is one of the challenges that faces members, particularly on the government side of the house at the present time. To those new faces sitting on the opposition side of the house I say this: They were sent to the parliament of Canada to present the views on which they were elected. Since we sit in opposition it is our responsibility and our duty to present those views in contrast to the policies or lack of policies put forward by hon. gentlemen sitting opposite. May I say that during the last three and a half years it has been largely a case of lack of policies. That is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) thought it necessary to go to the country seeking a majority.

Our responsibility is to oppose constructively, putting forward our program in contrast to the program that we feel is inadequate to meet the needs of Canadians in this year of 1966 and in the years that follow. May I say that in the business of the House of Commons we would like to hear more from the members of the back benches on the government side voicing their views in debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nasserden: We want to have our own fair share of representation in debate, despite the fact that there are those few in number who today claim that they constitute a party, here in the House of Commons.

When we think of the waste of time, and perhaps it is not altogether a waste of time, on motions and many things of that sort where many people are presenting their points of view, Mr. Speaker, how many times has the house grown restless from hearing a repetition of those points of view that have been put forward under the guise of a viewpoint of another party.

I cannot think of any really good reason why the government should be given supply at this time, except that it is the generosity of Her Majesty's loyal opposition that wants to get on with the business of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I will take the few minutes at my disposal to point out to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene), who is occupying his seat, and to the minister responsible for ARDA, Mr. Sauvé, that it is urgent to take steps to improve the farming situation in Quebec, particularly in the riding of Roberval.

I welcome the appointment of the hon. member for Renfrew South as Minister of Agriculture. We are all the happier because it has been over 50 years since Ontario was given such an honour. Without being jealous of Ontario, we ask the government to think a little about the province of Quebec when making the next appointment.

I am sorry I cannot go as far as the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) who stated, as reported in *Hansard* on page 42, that the new minister was the first bilingual minister of agriculture since confederation:

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, who is the first bilingual holder of the portfolio since confederation.

It is not that I do not have great respect for the new Minister of Agriculture, but my hon. friend probably wanted to make a little joke in the interest of his party. But he does not have the right to alter historical facts. Last year, I asked the minister of agriculture to give me a list of the agriculture ministers since confederation. I did not want to find out if there had been a bilingual minister of agriculture since confederation, because I was sure of that, but to find out how long it had been since Quebec had been given her share of ministers. I therefore ask the hon. member for Lotbinière to listen, because he will learn some surprising things.

In fact, that list shows that the first minister of agriculture for Canada was Hon. J. C.