

*The Address—Mr. Friesen*

latter. Having grown up in a minority ethnic group I have come to appreciate the richness of the cultural, moral and spiritual heritage that is mine as a member of that group. Nevertheless, I recognize the fact that these groups are easily overlooked by the masses. I am sure members of other groups can give similar testimony. However, it is not to the needs of these minority groups that I wish to address myself. It is, rather, to the needs of minority groups which cut across political and ethnic boundaries and which are all too easily the victims of the indifference and tyranny of the majority.

I speak on behalf of the senior citizens of our country, those who have contributed so much to the greatness of Canada, and who now all too often have to depend upon the capricious gratuity of big government. What kind of bargaining rights do they enjoy? There is no Perry Report guaranteeing them a 60 per cent or even a 40 per cent increase. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that today it does not pay to be a member of that minority group.

There is another minority group with no bargaining rights. I speak of the thousands of Canadians who are victims of incurable and crippling disease. Thousands of dollars have been spent each year on Canada Council grants to fund the most inconceivably esoteric projects possible. And all the while medical research projects go begging. When was the last time there was a demonstration on the steps of parliament by people suffering from MS, or muscular dystrophy or diabetes or who were on dialysis machines? These people, Mr. Speaker, are not the kind who demonstrate; they just suffer. They form a group, made up in every sense of the word, from victims of the "tyranny of the majority".

And there are the hundreds of small groups of workers, non-unionized, who work for a minimum wage, who have no bargaining rights and whose minimum wages are also being eaten up by inflation.

● (2030)

It is easy enough for any party having a majority to confuse power with greatness, but the greatness of which I speak is not simply the power to overcome the opposition and the ability to flex political muscle.

The greatness of which I speak is the kind which is strong enough to allow one not to be afraid to display his own humanity. It is the kind of greatness which allows one to realize and accept his own limitations. It is that kind of greatness which, realizing his strength, allows one to accept the risk of admitting mistakes once in a while. It is the kind of greatness that allows one to see that the admission of a mistake is not necessarily the sign of weakness but, in the truest sense of humility, a display of one of the qualities of strength.

I recognize that the Minister of Agriculture admitted this afternoon that perhaps he made a mistake; I suggest to you that he was not admitting a mistake but rather admitting to a peccadillo, a little error. If he admitted to a mistake that would lead to openness and an opportunity for everyone to examine the situation. As yet there has been no evidence that this kind of openness is going to exist.

As I flip through the pages of history I see two kinds of great leaders who are remembered to this day. There are

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the Alexanders, the Caesars and the Napoleons. Then there is Abraham Lincoln, Mr. Ghandi and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The former inflame the mind and the latter inspire the heart. The former had super efficiency while the latter had heart and humanity. There is the centre of that great biblical paradox, "for when I am weak, then I am strong".

If it is the goal of the government simply to cling to power only because it feels a majority is right, I am sure it can summon from a large store of political dexterity enough gimmicks to satisfy even its least disciplined backbenchers and remain in office a full term. But if its goal is to aspire to greatness then its motives must transcend the goals of immediate expediencies. Rather, it must begin by admitting to its own limitations. It must touch base with its own humanity. It must do more than sympathize, it must empathize. It must learn to feel. It is still a fact that you should not get so worked up over your own cause that you forget your humanity and consequent imperfection.

Yesterday the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in commending the two freshmen government members who moved and seconded the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, said of them that they:

—certainly represent that new generation of Canadians who expect of Canada and its government actions that are truly worthy of the people.

I agree with the Prime Minister. Together with many other Canadians I just hope they do not have to wait too long.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for letting me take part at this time in the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

First I wish to congratulate you, on behalf of my colleagues of the Social Credit Party of Canada, for your nomination, as you have been chosen to chair the very important business taking place in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, our congratulations are heart-felt and we assure you of our co-operation so that our business reflects the opinions of our fellow citizens and that it be effective. For these reasons, we had a warm welcome for your promises. We hope that yours will be more than promises, unlike those of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when he stated his intention to modernize procedure in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, for many years our party has been calling for a speeding-up of the dispatch of business, for a reform of the antiquated and obsolete British procedure, through common agreement, without any partisanship, so that the Canadian Parliament would evolve into a true reflection of our society of 1974 and of the society of the future, providing for better planning and greater effectiveness.

● (2040)

Mr. Speaker, without prejudice to the excellent work performed by the former President of the Privy Council, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), I gladly note that the new incumbent seems to work in close co-operation with other House leaders, not on a daily but on a planned basis. Thus he allowed us, for example, this afternoon, to pass a measure which will