

Speech from the Throne

Speaker, I ask you in all seriousness, if Canada faced an hour of crisis in the future who would you rather have at the head of this nation, the leaders of either of the two opposition parties or the leader of the present government?

An hon. Member: Don't answer that; you may incriminate yourself.

Mr. Whicher: I leave it to the people of this nation to decide. Mr. Speaker, ever since the present Prime Minister took office he has been opposed at every turn by the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whicher: These advocates of gloom and doom have told us that Canada is in terrible shape; in fact, in the worst shape in history. They emphasize, without exception, our problems and never once talk of the many good things taking place in our nation. I ask them now, Mr. Speaker, where would they rather live? Would it be in once mighty England, in Ireland or in Pakistan? To be fair, would it be in the United States where over one and one-half million people are on welfare in New York City alone right at this very minute.

An hon. Member: We are catching up fast.

Mr. Whicher: Would it be in the United States whose citizens tried to burn down the great city of Detroit only a couple of years ago and in whose metropolitan centres it is not safe to go out at night? Once again, would it be in the United States which is saddled with a racial problem that is terrible to contemplate, as well as a war that all its citizens wish to get out of. No, Mr. Speaker, when the chips are down, all Canadians would want to remain in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Indeed, if circumstances would allow it, one half of the world would like to move here. While appreciating the difficulties that this country faces with the unemployed, and while admitting that we have many imperfections, although not as many as other countries have, let me point out the following fact. No one who is working in Canada today, whether he be an electrician or a plumber, a teacher or a nurse—

An hon. Member: Or Pierre Vallieres.

Mr. Whicher: —a doctor or a lawyer, a politician or a secretary, ever had it so good.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Our greatest problem is to get coloured television sets instead of black and white and to have two or three cars in every family instead of one.

Last autumn, the Calgary Stampeders came back to Calgary after winning the Grey Cup in Vancouver. Thousands of fans greeted them, shouting, "We are number one." Last spring, the Montreal Canadiens returned to Montreal to be greeted by thousands of Montrealers shouting the same thing. It is high time, Mr. Speaker, that 22 Canadians stood on their feet and shouted, "We are number one."

[Mr. Whicher.]

An hon. Member: Twenty-two?

Mr. Whicher: Anyone can make the odd mistake. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, we are number one. I defy the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the New Democratic Party to say otherwise. If we are, Mr. Speaker, surely, the captain of this great ship, the Prime Minister of Canada, deserves some recognition.

An hon. Member: There are too many leaks in that captain's ship.

Mr. Whicher: I hear all that, Mr. Speaker, and it reminds me of the story of the surgeon who was performing a brain transplant. He said that it cost \$100 for an ounce of Liberal brains, \$150 for Tories and \$1,000 for NDP. The poor fellow asked why it cost \$1,000 for NDP brains and the surgeon replied, "It takes a hell of a lot of NDPs before you can find an ounce of brains."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whicher: I guess we are getting into the meat now and if you fellows want to open up, I will too.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister has to be criticized for his sins, and no man is without them,—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: —then he should get credit for being the leader of this great country, the greatest place in the world in which to live in this year, 1972.

Mr. Speaker, in a few days, the President of the United States will be visiting the great People's Republic of China. Without fear of contradiction, I tell you that it was the Prime Minister of Canada who really initiated this trip, which means so much to the peace of this world. Without fear of contradiction, I say to you that it was because of Canada's efforts in bringing about the recognition of Red China at the United Nations, it was because of Canada's action in recognizing that country through the exchange of diplomats that got the United States and China talking to each other again. And it will be because of the Prime Minister's efforts in initiating friendly gestures to such great countries as the U.S.S.R. and China that will enable our business community and our agricultural people to initiate trade with the huge numbers of people in those countries, so vast in number, that they are almost beyond comprehension.

Mr. Papproski: Let's see you walk on the water, Pierre.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, if we want peace in this world, we have to talk to everybody and if we want to do business with them, we have to learn to talk too.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Oh, don't stop.

Mr. Whicher: —let me say this. I am sure that the Russians and the Chinese and the French and the English are