

The Address—Mr. Stanfield

An hon. Member: The only defeated candidates left; poor Mr. Tucker.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, in criticizing the Speech from the Throne, I do not want to exaggerate. I want to be fair and I want to admit that there was one thing new. In each of the preceding 101 years of Canadian nationhood under the leadership of both parties the speech referred to His or Her Majesty's government. The speech we are now discussing refers simply to the government. This is, of course, a much more elegant method of expression and obviously establishes a very special identity for Canada. At least, it spares Her Majesty the embarrassment of association with a Speech from the Throne which reveals so little commitment to helping the ordinary people of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The Canadian people as well as the members of this house could be forgiven if, after the first reading of the throne speech, they regard it as some sort of a clever put-off. But what is most alarming to me is that the government itself takes the document seriously as a Speech from the Throne, and that it actually believes this empty speech is an adequate way for Canada to enter the decade of the 1970's.

There is sort of a special literary quality to the Speech from the Throne. It reads as though it were written by a committee at a cocktail party, such a genteel cocktail party that it recognized the need for establishing a national committee on law reform but was content to consider the question of poverty in Canada at some future date.

The government, sir, is running this country as though it were a private club with a very exclusive membership. If you are poor you do not count. If you are an Indian you are shipped off to the provinces to be looked after. If you are unilingual you run an elevator. If you want to stop the slaughter in Biafra or maintain an effective role in NATO you are not sophisticated enough for the tight little Canada this government foresees.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

● (12:10 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: From the first days of this administration, I have been alarmed most by the apparent determination of the influential members of the cabinet to try to fit the people and the problems of Canada into a predetermined mould and to ignore or ridicule those uncomfortable realities which do not fit

[Mr. Stanfield.]

the preconception. Professor Abraham Rotstein put it very succinctly in the October issue of the *Canadian Forum*. I would like to quote him:

The Prime Minister's anti-nationalism is well known, but not so apparent is the classical liberalism out of which this derives and how that shapes his basic outlook. A man of many sides claiming a pragmatic approach to politics, he is the most deeply ideological of Canadian prime ministers. This surfaces rarely, but when it does in an unguarded moment of candour, the statement may be a revelation (even after the P.R. types have rushed in to set the statement 'in context'). The most famous of his personal *cris de cœur* is the query to the western farmers, 'Why should I sell your wheat?' It is the perfect embodiment of the ethos of the market economy—it expresses the P.M.'s personal sense of the rightness of things economic. It is worth reflecting on how "deep-seated a commitment it would require to wash out even momentarily, seventy-five years of the history of the Canadian West—the wheat pools, the battle around the Winnipeg grain exchange and finally the Canadian Wheat Board itself!

The new policy toward Canadian Indians provides a second case. The attempt to have Canadian Indians 'sink or swim' in five years is reminiscent only of the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834—the pivotal legislation for the creation of a free labour market in England's emergent laissez-faire economy. To be told further, as we have been, that one section of Canadian society cannot form treaties with another section, is to wash out in an instant, another two hundred years of Canadian history. The valuable civil rights legislation of the last session of Parliament, in itself a great achievement, rounds out the picture. The cast of mind is unmistakably that of classical liberalism. Despite the P.M.'s personal motto—*la raison avant la passion*—he himself expresses the triumph of the ideological passion, not only over reason but over history as well. This stance is his personal privilege, but in the circumstances it is also the country's burden."

The former minister of transport, now the member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), established in our minds a similar fear when he remarked on the inability of the influential members of the cabinet to understand the real problems of the Canadian people. The throne speech confirms that fear because it is largely irrelevant to those millions of Canadians who, for one reason or another, need the help of Ottawa. It is largely irrelevant to those millions more whose prosperity and progress depend upon the leadership of the federal government in meeting the economic and environmental hazards of a new decade.

We will be hearing from the Prime Minister no doubt this afternoon, and I hope he will take the opportunity to fill in some of these gaps and reassure us by bringing forward programs that were not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne dealing with the very real and genuine problems of our people.