

*The Address—Miss F. MacDonald*

is sometimes difficult to articulate these questions in terms of the every day concerns of the Canadian citizen. But I am certain that there is running not far below the surface in this country a strong current of Canadian nationalism, a consciousness of our identity and an awareness of the need to strengthen our economic and political independence.

Sir John A. Macdonald believed that there were certain distinctive values which the people of British North America had in common, values which were worth the effort of developing a strong independent state. In that sense, Macdonald was a nationalist. In that sense, too, I am a nationalist. Macdonald recognized that confederation could not work if Canada did not have a strong, independent national economy. That is no less true today than it was in 1867. Canadian nationalism is considered by some not to be of primary importance, because there is not one concrete incident or issue to crystalize it. The cause of Canadian nationalism is too complex and important to be wrapped up in one issue; it is all pervasive. It relates not only to foreign investment but to many other areas: the extent to which we are producing Canadian textbooks for our schools, the extent to which we have available films produced by the National Film Board, and many other areas.

I believe there is a danger that, if focussed on one issue, nationalism can become negative or chauvinistic or anti-American and the good, essential cause of Canadian nationalism is thereby degraded. Rather than attempt to harness this current of Canadian nationalism to one passing issue, surely it is for parliament to give it a creative and constructive explanation in many different ways. I gladly acknowledge the imaginative and positive efforts that are already being made in this direction, such as assistance to the publishing industry in Ontario and the good work of the CRTC, among several federal bodies that I can mention.

The time has come to reinforce our control over our economic and political destiny. I believe this parliament can do so by joining with the provinces in an effective means of examining present and proposed foreign investment in Canada. We can do it by re-examining our resource policies, not by being stampeded into precipitate action by others. We can do it by adopting an industrial strategy to ensure that Canadian resources are processed in Canada. We must provide support for the development of an independent Canadian technological capability. We must adopt measures to encourage foreign owned companies to re-invest their profits in Canada and to ensure that Canadian borrowers are not deprived of capital because our lending institutions have chosen to give preferred status to the larger multi-national corporations. I firmly believe that such measures would strengthen and stimulate our national economy.

A new national policy must commit Canada to the elimination of poverty. There are probably as many as 6 million men, women and children in this country today who are compelled to live on incomes which are below the poverty line. I have seen poverty in this country. I grew up with it in Cape Breton. I have seen it in rural Saskatchewan. I have seen it in the outposts of Newfoundland, and I have seen it in my own constituency. Until we have solved

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this problem, no government can dare feel self-satisfied, no politician can be allowed to indulge in complacency.

Economic development means, first of all, real solutions to unemployment and the resulting poverty. We know that poverty causes irreversibly destructive effects on individual character. Isolation and despair have risen in vast numbers of Canadians who are confronted by the cruel realization that they cannot attain the self-respect that comes from a secure livelihood. This is the realistic human side of economic issues. In this post election period, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his colleagues say they have discovered the unemployed and the old age pensioners. But it is not enough to offer palliatives after the fact. This government has no comprehensive social policy, no policy which seeks to offer enduring solutions.

I cannot have confidence in a government which has allowed soaring food prices to hurt hundreds of thousands of Canadians on limited budgets and yet has taken no action. I cannot have confidence in a government which fails to provide sufficient expansionary economic policies while a record number of Canadians are without jobs. I cannot have confidence in a government which has resolved merely to do a better job of selling its policies while failing to tackle the maze of incompetently administered programs. These things have happened because this is a government which has become remote from the people and insensitive to individual human concerns, a government whose vision is limited by its isolation from the people.

I believe that the success of any policy is related to the responsiveness of government and I would argue further that the responsiveness of government is related to the sensitivity, understanding and interest of those who hold power. But this has been notoriously lacking in the recent years. I think there is an urgent need for government to recognize, not just pay lip service, to the need for greater involvement, wider participation, more thorough consultation and understanding. I would see this as basic to the evolution of the new national policies I have been discussing. If this should not materialize, I fear the result will be the alienation of more and more Canadians from a political system that fails to respond to their needs.

• (1540)

The maintenance of our political system is of special interest to me because most of my adult life has been spent as an organizer for my political party, as an officer, or as an active worker. It is a matter not just of my personal observation of many Canadians but confirmed by every scientific study of the subject I have seen, that there is a substantial number of Canadians who are convinced that nothing they say or do, including the exercise of their right to vote, has the slightest impact on the governmental or parliamentary process. To many, the machinery of government seems to operate in its own way for its own purpose, and while it closely affects their lives, they feel powerless to influence it.

The House is aware of the numerous methods that have been proposed or experimented with to give the citizens a greater degree of influence on decisions that affect their lives, and the kind of country they live in, but none of