

Ministerial Responsibility

Mr. Mackasey: More or less in those terms. If you look at *Hansard*, which I did at seven o'clock, I think you will see that there are 40 odd questions which, if you follow through on the implication, will show that in every case they represent criticism, unintentional maybe, of the public service.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Or the government.

Mr. Mackasey: Or of the government, but also the public service. It is not the government which criticized Reisman and Grandy who were public servants.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Retired.

Mr. Mackasey: Who were public servants and then retired. I do not wish to become involved in personalities. However, they are the people who brought up names today, not the government. I do not want to get involved in names. I would rather get to the fact that we live in a society right here which, rightly or wrongly, and I think rightly, is demanding of our private enterprise system a certain quality of life. We are demanding a Gross National Product that can support the poor, the blind, the crippled, the alcoholics, and even the lazy people. We are saying to that private enterprise system, which I think all of us stand for, including the converts in the corner because they become converts when they form provincial governments, that rightly or wrongly it is the best thing for this country but that at the present moment it is subject to a lot of tensions.

For the first time maybe in 30 years these tensions have come in the industrial world, or in the "have" world if you like.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the minister but his allotted time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Mackasey: I promise, Mr. Speaker, not to be too long. I just want to make a point which is important to me. Perhaps for the first time some of the industrialized nations such as our own are a little uncertain, a little afraid, a little terrified to trust the market place. They are worried because of the OPEC dispute, because of the energy crisis, and because of the environmental problems. They are worried because the poor are no longer passive. They are worried because, ironically in our quite logical dedication to democracy, for the first time all Canadians have a voice through some organization. This is not abnormal. It has penetrated, I believe, the whole western world, the whole of industrialized society. It is bound to have reflected on people. When it reflects on people it is bound to reflect on parliamentarians on both sides of the House. I am being as non-partisan as I can.

What is the problem with which we are faced? The problem is to resist panic. The problem is not to recreate the mood of the thirties when somehow leadership was tired out, and the leaders who then came forward were Hitler and Mussolini who were going to solve all the problems of the world when they were first elected. This is

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

the problem in this country. How do we react to this world-wide situation? It is not really world-wide.

One thing about prosperity is that if you have never known it you never know when you are worse off. The industrialized world has known prosperity for 30 years. Suddenly we are faced with a challenge. We are faced with the thought that there may be no energy in 20 years, the thought that we may destroy the ecology, the thought that just possible our free enterprise system might not be able to provide the wealth that is needed to look after the less fortunate or those who somehow have to be supported, and also provide those who contribute to the quality of life whether they be doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers or whatever. It would be surprising if the question period and the government's actions did not somehow reflect that concern of the people. Our challenge is to have the courage to resist a mod which if carried to its ultimate, will simply destroy what has taken decades to build—our concern for each other.

I look forward to a country in which we recognize everybody's right the poor and the blind, to a minimum income, but also a society where anybody in this room can have children who, if they want to work 10 or 15 hours a day, can go to it in order to have a two-car garage, a summer home, and have a level of income that is incomparable around the world. This is really why I am here and why most of us are here on both sides of this House. This is why I feel very deeply about this institution. I may be in the minority in my thinking and I do not apologize for that.

I just want to say that as a member of the Liberal party, and as a member of this parliament which has run for 300 and some days, I have no apologies for our records. As I said earlier before six o'clock, we have brought in about 100 meaningful pieces of legislation. When I say "we" I am speaking for everybody, because parliament is not just one party; it is four parties. We are dedicated; we fight; we improve, and hopefully and practically we end up with better pieces of legislation for all Canadians. It really is very unimportant whether one sits here or there so long as one is dedicated to improving society. Much of our legislation has been improved by backbenchers and by opposition members. That is why we are here. We are not here simply to be re-elected.

We must have the courage of our convictions which got us elected in the first place. Mr. Speaker, you might say what does that have to do with the public service? Simply this: if you want government to look after the lame, the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lazy as well as all the others including the abandoned mother and the widow, rather than have private enterprise saddled with it, then you have to expect bureaucracy to grow in the same way corporations such as General Motors grow. So it is incidental to me whether the public service is comprised of 5,000 people or 500,000 people. What is important is why we hire them and what they are doing.

I like to see our public service fulfil a useful role. It is the best public service in the world, despite the speech of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton today. The opposition has no monopoly on concern for the public service. I must be partisan to the point of repeating that this is the party, the Liberal party, which gave that public service a