

*Speech from the Throne***GOVERNMENT ORDERS****SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Thursday, February 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ross Whicher for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin by congratulating the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher). He spoke forcefully and in an entertaining way. Furthermore, he supplied us with a certain amount of ammunition to be used against his party. One cannot ask much more of the hon. gentleman.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Stanfield: I should also like to congratulate the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Lajoie) who seconded the motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. He expressed on the subject of Canada feelings that deserve to be remembered.

[English]

I should also like to greet the new cabinet, Mr. Speaker, and to congratulate the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) on his elevation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: His efforts to bring some measure of comprehensibility to the tax legislation may not have been successful, but that was not perhaps entirely his fault. The fault lay largely within the bill itself. In any event, the hon. gentleman demonstrated a capacity for hard work which will serve him in good stead for whatever time the follies of his colleagues may allow him to stay in his new portfolio. The other cabinet changes are of interest to this House primarily for one reason: they show another side of the Prime Minister's character. His reputation in this House and in the country has generally been the reputation of a fighter. He has given the impression on many occasions of a man who does not easily change direction. However, on this occasion, with an election coming up, he has shown that when political circumstances warrant it, he would rather switch than fight. As for the new Minister of National Defence (Mr. Benson), I can simply say that the appointment is substantially appropriate, particularly in view of the substantial number of successful search and destroy missions that the minister carried out in his former portfolio. As for the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner)—

An hon. Member: Poor John!

Mr. Stanfield:—one can only say that greater love hath no man.

An hon. Member: Get on with the debate.

Mr. Stanfield: I will not spend much time in discussing the Throne Speech itself.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: There were a few—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: There were a few, specific, positive measures.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) will not mind my interrupting him for a moment. I must bring to the attention of hon. members that what must be considered as rude remarks are disturbing some hon. members and are certainly disturbing the Chair. They have been coming from certain parts of the chamber during the time when the hon. member who has the floor has been speaking. I think they are entirely unbecoming and unacceptable to the Chair. I hope that all hon. members will co-operate.

Mr. Hees: The people across the way are a rude lot.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, there were some positive measures that I was pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne, measures such as the commitment to improve the Canada Manpower programs. Certainly, any additional steps to improve training and placement services and to make them more adequate for meeting the needs of specially disadvantaged peoples of Canada are very welcome indeed. I was interested in seeing that the federal government has announced its intention to become involved in legal aid. I should like to know what there is new about that, because if this government was not rendering legal aid to Yves Geoffroy, what was it doing!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The speech also stressed the need for harmonious relations with the provincial governments. I would not have thought that was necessary at this point. I was under the impression that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) had established harmonious relations between the federal government and the provinces once and for all time, in view of the gracious tribute that he paid recently to the Prime Minister of British Columbia. So, on the whole, I cannot take the speech seriously.

In the circumstances of 1972, it is clear that the government is not capable of implementing effective long-term policies for solving our major economic and social problems in Canada. After all, this government has had four non-election years when it could have set out on that task. It did not do it then. Why should we expect better of it now? The speech is obviously the work of a government that is in love with itself to the point of total blindness. It is too bad that there was a near miss with the calendar, because this throne speech ought to have been presented on Valentine's Day. Surely, it is one of the most glowing hymns of self-love in all the annals of romantic literature.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The just society has disappeared. In the previous throne speech it was described as a distant ideal. I guess that the distance has increased now to the point where it is completely out of sight now so far as this