

The Address—Mr. Ricard

I suggest therefore that there is no reason why the government could not at this time proceed before the deadline which I believe is six months from June last—December 10 next—to do something,—

An hon. Member: We wanted to hear your speech first.

Mr. Ellis: —to redeem the pledge made, which was I believe expected by the people generally. We have been accustomed to political betrayals on the part of the predecessors of the present government but we did hope there would be some slight difference between the actions of the members sitting on your right, Mr. Speaker, and the members who now sit on your left. I would say, however, that the conduct of the government in so far as the South Saskatchewan dam is concerned indicates there is no essential difference between the Liberal and Conservative parties or, while there may be very slight shades of difference, when it comes down to doing something and getting into action there is little choice between them.

I suggest therefore that while the hon. members on your right, Mr. Speaker, may talk in their speeches for home consumption and boast of all the things they have done in seven weeks, they have not yet scratched the surface; they have not yet come to grips with the most important problems facing this country at the present time—unemployment, wheat marketing, parity price legislation and all the things which the Conservative party promised to the people of this country. These are the things which the people of Canada were led to expect and I suggest that instead of becoming preoccupied with seeking ways and means of provoking a vote at a time which they consider advantageous to themselves, they should come forward and present their full program, go as far as they can, and then let the people of Canada be the judges.

(Translation):

Mr. Theogene Ricard (St. Hyacinthe-Bagot): Mr. Speaker, like any new member, it is with deep emotion that I rise to speak in this house. At the outset of my remarks, I should like to pay tribute to my constituents of St. Hyacinthe-Bagot and to thank them for the mark of confidence they gave me by electing me their member on June 10 last. I should like to assure them that I will always do my best to deserve this confidence and that it will always be a pleasure and a duty for me to speak and act on their behalf.

I should like to thank the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) for honouring the people of my constituency by appointing me acting delegate to the 12th session of the United Nations, now taking place in New York city. May I repeat what is being said by some of my constituents: "Never was so great an honour shown the St. Hyacinthe-Bagot constituency under a Liberal government."

I would also like to offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Speaker and Mr. Deputy Speaker on their elevation to their present important posts. I also wish to pay tribute to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. St. Laurent). I wish him good health so that he can long enjoy a retirement which he has so richly deserved.

May I also say how ably the mover and the seconder of the address in reply (Mr. Smith and Mr. Arsenault) acquitted themselves of their respective tasks.

Mr. Speaker, rising as I do for the first time in the house, I cannot help saying how proud I am, and for several reasons. Let me name the major ones:

In the first place, I represent a constituency which is mostly made up of the two main classes in this country of ours, workers and farmers.

In the last elections, those two most representative classes of society joined in entrusting their affairs to the Conservative party. Another reason why I am proud to have been returned here is that this constituency had always been reputed to be a Liberal stronghold. You will no doubt be interested to learn, Mr. Speaker, that I am the second Conservative member to be returned since Confederation in the fine constituency of St. Hyacinthe-Bagot. The first Conservative member was elected 78 years ago with a majority of only six votes. My Liberal opponent having obtained a majority of close to 13,000 votes at the previous election, and having been elected by acclamation twice before that, it will be admitted that the 2,094 majority which I obtained from the electors of my constituency is such as to fill me with legitimate satisfaction and pride.

Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, the largest groups of electors in St. Hyacinthe-Bagot riding are made up of workmen and farmers. At the mere mention of those two classes of people, you realize that in my riding, perhaps more and certainly as much as any other constituency there is need for sound social legislation.