

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

asking, begging, pleading that the government fulfil the vacuum that has been created because they have not done these things previously, we had no action. We have therefore come to the conclusion that if this is the best the government can give us at this time, then it is time that we go to the people about the matter.

I have no confidence whatsoever that the Liberal party has any alternative that would deal with anything in any better way. Taking into consideration the post-war years alone, they had 12 years when there should have been the greatest prosperity in Canada in all our history.

An hon. Member: There was.

Mr. Thompson: In spite of the fact that this was the environment in which they were administering the affairs of this country, they bungled the affairs of the administration of the country so much that the people of Canada were compelled to turn them out.

The reason why we have come to this conclusion at the present time is simply that I believe the people of Canada expect and deserve something better than what we are giving to them in this house at the present time. Therefore, in amendment to the amendment which has been moved by the leader of the official opposition, seconded by the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency (Mr. Marcoux) I move as follows:

That all the words after "government" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"has failed up to this time to give a clear statement of policy respecting Canada's national defence, and has failed to organize the business of the house so that the 1963-64 estimates and budget could be introduced, and has failed to outline a positive program of follow-up action respecting many things for which this parliament and previous parliaments have already given authority, and does not have the confidence of the Canadian people.

The amendment would then read as follows:

This government has failed up to this time to give a clear statement of policy respecting Canada's national defence, and has failed to organize the business of the house so that the 1963-64 estimates and budget could be introduced, and has failed to outline a positive program of follow-up action respecting many things for which this parliament and previous parliaments have already given authority, and does not have the confidence of the Canadian people.

It is not my intention, Mr. Speaker, to prolong this debate on our part except to say that we sincerely regret that we have not been able to give leadership to the administration of the public affairs of this country in a better way. It is not sufficient that we just try to build each other up by knocking each other down. What we must have is a positive, constructive approach to our problems. Let us remember that a wrong decision is probably not as bad as no decision at all.

[Mr. Thompson.]

What we shall be accused of in this house of minorities in this twenty fifth parliament, as I believe history will record it, is that we were unable to come to decisions that would transform policies into action. Therefore we have failed the electorate who put us here.

I believe that the only way in which we can possibly correct this situation is to go back to the people and ask them for a new mandate, trusting that they will have seen the folly in both of the old parties. The awakening realization that Canada in these changing times needs to reaffirm her stand on the basic elements of democracy, needs to come to grips with the application of those principles on which I believe we in this house all agree. It means to adapt our methods so that they will fit the conditions so that which we are able to produce, whether it be goods or services, in whatever realm or whatever kind we think of, is available to the Canadian people according to their willingness to work, their enterprise and their pioneering spirit.

While I say I am disappointed with this house of minorities in this twenty fifth parliament, I have much conviction, hope, and assurance with regard to the Canadian people. I believe that Canada is a great nation and that, without exception, Canada has one of the greatest peoples in the world. We have heard words this afternoon about the great heritages that have been carried into confederation and passed on to us today through the mother races which came together in confederation. On top of that there has been added the cultural heritage and the pioneering spirit and the determination of millions of new Canadians to live as free men. I think we can set an example to the world if only we had a government that gave leadership that would lead us forward during the next four years and prove to the world that people can live together and move forward in the development not only of its human but its material resources. It was this confidence and this assurance that gave me the spirit and the will to go forward to try to make some contribution to the public affairs of our nation and of this world. If the experiment which is Canada should fail, what hope is there for peace and the peaceful development of the world? I maintain that there is none. Therefore as we stand at this critical threshold in the history of our nation and in our responsibilities to this parliament, I believe that each one of us must look upon these things mighty carefully and realize our responsibility as leaders. We are leaders in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret interrupting the hon. member but I must inform him that the clock has imposed sanctions.