

*Speech from the Throne*

efforts to create greater symbols for Canada. If they will not go for Canada Day, perhaps they will go for Maple Leaf Day; but let us have something more imaginative, constructive and Canadian than Dominion Day which, in one of our official languages, in many areas is considered to be subservient.

I believe in a multicultural Canada with two official languages, in a nation which consists of our native peoples, the Indians, Eskimos and Metis, and has many cultural roots in the Italians, Germans, Ukrainians and Poles. I also hope that we will find it possible to bring to Canada more Chinese. Has any man in this chamber ever met a Chinese he did not like? I submit that they enrich our humour, culture and dignity, and I hope we have more of them here.

I am proud of the multicultural policy of Canada. I am proud that the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), despite many sly innuendos aimed in his direction, has advanced this Canadian society by advocating and initiating an imaginative and worth-while outlook for Canada. It means that we welcome the development and maintenance of all the cultural ties and languages in our great Canadian nation; we encourage the growth of greater understanding among Canadians from coast to coast.

I hope you will bear with me, Mr. Speaker, when I prod a little deeper into a problem of individuality which is an important theme in the Throne Speech. When we look at the individual we realize that many of us are lucky, successful and wealthy in comparison with many other Canadians. I wonder if we could not find a means of pairing a Canadian of wealth with one in poverty, if we could not have a dynamic policy whereby every person with an income of, say, \$10,000 or \$15,000 tries to pair himself with someone who has suffered. One cannot get a perfect solution by doing that, but let us not scorn it. I feel that we should do this also in the school system so that every lad from a good, happy home is encouraged to find in the city block or area an unfortunate child and become a friend, a big brother of that child. I do not see any government plan as such to encourage this kind of operation.

• (1720)

Throughout Canada we have Big Brother groups, the YMCA, the Roman Catholic Church Aid, the Protestant Church Aid and all kinds of aid groups, but there does not yet seem to be a comprehensive plan, which will be part of everyone's life, to help individuals in poor circumstances. I really believe this could be done and I believe that this government could do it. I see no reason why it would not work. I would go even a step further and say that I hope and pray that every schoolchild in Canada will eventually have a pen pal in some other part of the world. We should try to build bridges between individuals of the world, because until we are strong enough to bind ourselves together with trust and confidence as individuals we shall not solve the problems of armaments and the arms race.

Mr. Speaker, I praise the Prime Minister for the bold initiative he took in recognizing the People's Republic of China. It is apparent that this recognition was a very important consideration in the changed attitude of the United States toward China and in the fact that the heads of those two countries are meeting today. I think it is

[Mr. Gibson.]

another example of the initiative, daring and brilliance of the Prime Minister that he should bring this about. I have no hesitation in praising the Prime Minister for taking these courageous, interesting and innovative steps which have not only recognized China but brought about wheat sales to China and put us on the map in Asia in a way we have not seen before.

I mentioned that I have been to Cyprus. When I was in a restaurant there, a friendly man turned to me and asked where I was from. When I said Canada, he shrugged his shoulders and said "Trudeau" with a big smile, and we shook hands. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it was a moment of great pride for me. Our Prime Minister has the imagination, the daring, the physical strength and moral courage to put Canada on the map in Asia and throughout the world, and he will go down in history as one of Canada's greatest prime ministers.

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to participate in the Speech from the Throne debate is welcome because it is one of the few debates in this House where members are given almost complete and free rein. While I have not studied the precedents in this regard, I imagine there are very few instances when Your Honour or your predecessors were able to demand that a member speak in relation to the issue currently before the House. The Speech from the Throne tradition is very old and is important in the sense that it gives the 264 members of this House, or those who participate in the debate, an opportunity to reflect on matters of national and immediate concern from their own particular vantage point.

I think it is particularly important for this country that we have this debate, and it is unfortunate that in the changes made in the rules during the last couple of years the debate on estimates was removed from this chamber and replaced by opposition days. This has to a degree removed the opportunity for the individual to express an opinion on matters of a specific nature relating to his representation in this chamber. To a degree we have perhaps diluted the importance of this kind of activity in the House of Commons.

We must realize that in attempting to provide a national framework of government for this country we are dealing with one of the most difficult and perhaps one of the most distinctly different countries to govern anywhere in the world. This is partly a matter of our geography but it is also a matter of our history which has exerted various pressures upon us both from outside this continent and from within it.

I think the Speech from the Throne debate may be of particular importance this year. Canadians who take the time and trouble to read *Hansard* or newspaper reports of it may wish to make for themselves some appraisal of the state of the nation. I think, too, it is appropriate that members be given an opportunity to respond after the recent Speech from the Throne and remarks by the party leaders. It is important because these remarks have helped to set the scene for a federal election which all members are aware will take place shortly.

I think that, in a way, the Speech from the Throne was an accurate rendering of the state of mind of this government. It rose to a new high. The kind of high-blown language, the kind of atmospheric phrases to which this