

The Address—Mr. Jamieson

that much more; therefore, it is better to go ahead now.

I doubt whether there has been much effect this year. There might be a little more next year. When experts tell us these things, we doubt the effectiveness of certain measures that have been adopted by the government. If the government can show us a program that is credible in its performance with regard to a program of defeating inflation, it will have the support of this House. Up to the moment they have not done that. Therefore, we want to see the level of government expenditures. We want to see how credible they can be with regard to a number of the measures they have taken. On that basis, Mr. Speaker, I ask hon. members to support the motion of the opposition which condemns the actions the government has taken so far in this connection.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I join hon. members who have complimented the mover and second of this motion. Some hon. members know I had the honour of performing that task at the opening of the centennial session. I am very well aware that it is an honour which remains a highlight in the career of any parliamentarian. I think it is safe to say that many members of this House share the concern of the hon. member for Sarnia (Mr. Cullen) when he spoke about the fact that there is perhaps a growing irrelevancy with regard to the public attitude toward parliament.

As a comparatively new member of this House I am forced to the conclusion, albeit reluctantly, that this perhaps is no longer where the action is, in the strict sense of the word. From the point of view of the public, to use a familiar expression, they are off doing their own thing and leaving it to us to mind the store. In other words, it seems that the kind of discussions we have had during this debate and some of the speeches we have heard indicate that we have an almost total involvement with the present and we are not doing enough thinking about the future.

Not enough consideration is being given to goals and objectives for Canada. As a result we are not really tuned in with those we are trying to serve. This is quite an understandable situation. I do not think any of us could disagree that there is an enormous amount of truth in an old expression, if I may paraphrase it, which says that matters that are of immediate concern more or less force you to move aside the crises. In other words,

we seem to be always preoccupied and concerned with today and do not really get enough opportunity to talk about tomorrow.

The business of running the store, as I call it, is rather important to Canadians. It is very important that we apply our best talents and maximum capabilities to the business of managing the affairs of the nation. I am trying to say—and I would like to emphasize it—that this is not the totality of our job in the House; that in fact what the Canadian public is looking for as much as good management of the here and now is leadership with regard to the definition of goals for the future. They are looking for the clarifying of national purpose, and some indication from us that we have the ability to look far enough ahead to try and shape the structure of this country and to anticipate what the situation will be 5, 10 or 20 years from now. I suggest that is part of our responsibility that perhaps we are not coming to grips with sufficiently at the present time. With the greatest respect to the opposition, I agree that if I were in their place I would probably do precisely what they have done because it is the conventional wisdom to adopt that attitude. But I do not believe that much of what we heard from hon. gentlemen opposite has been of too much value in coming to grips with the immediate problems. It certainly has not helped us to define the goals, objectives and purposes to which I have referred.

We have had a steady and rather good recitation of rather obvious social and economic inadequacies. These are as well known to us as they are to hon. members opposite. They are certainly well known to those people within the Canadian public who are affected by the inadequacies. The opposition has simply said: This is wrong, this is wrong and this is wrong. What is the government going to do about it? With great respect, I say there have not been many concise and explicit indications of what the opposition parties would do under these circumstances. If I can paraphrase a familiar expression relating to another Conservative, when they suggest that there are instant solutions, in their hearts they know they are wrong.

● (3:40 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) must surely know better than most that this is so. Despite what the previous speaker said, it is a fact—I am sure it is of concern to hon. members opposite—that the Niagara Conference did not arrive at an agreed and precise program for dealing with poverty, one