

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

We all wish him a speedy recovery. However, we recall his words on November 29 1961, in Saskatoon—I happened to be in Saskatoon with him on the same day—when in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* he is reported as follows:

Today Hon. Alvin Hamilton, home from grain-selling trips which have taken him half way around the world, said that there would be no farm acreage payments in this calendar year. He did not attribute this to lack of federal dollars but said that the cheque machines required to roll out the barrels of money were busy with other financial details.

It was therefore left for the Prime Minister a little bit later to make the announcement of acreage payments. Of course, that is the usual procedure followed by this government. The good announcements come from the Prime Minister and the hard and harsh announcements come from the other ministers, as was the case with the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Walker) when he had to speak within a few hours after the Prime Minister had spoken—I am thinking of New Brunswick and Fredericton—and had given no indication that the bad announcement was to come shortly from the mouth of the Minister of Public Works about the Chignecto canal.

The speech from the throne contains a lot of old stuff. There are some promises of things that were promised years ago, no doubt on the assumption by the government that repetition is reputation. A good example of this is closure. We remember the ringing statements of the Prime Minister in 1957 and 1958 about what he was going to do with closure. Now, in 1962, we have the ringing declaration in the speech from the throne that the matter is going to be submitted to a parliamentary committee.

Some of the promises in the speech are promises to talk with the provinces about doing something in 1962 or to begin talking with the provinces about doing something. Of course, the contributory insurance plan of the government comes to mind in that connection. Some promises are to pay out large sums of money on the eve of an election without saying how much; a railroad here or a railroad there; a bridge in Montreal without tolls or in Prince Albert a bridge to political resources; a ferry promised now for a causeway promised once and refused yesterday.

Perhaps the most notable thing about the speech from the throne is its omissions. Some of these notable and important omissions are explainable only by the characteristic inability of the government to make up its mind, never to do today what it can put off until tomorrow or, if a royal commission can be appointed, until a few years from now.

Four main matters are omitted from the speech from the throne, in so far as any effective proposals for dealing with them are concerned. There is no program of action, although there are a few words, for the stimulation of economic growth, or even an indication of awareness of its necessity. Presumably—and I shall have something to say about that matter today—the government is quite satisfied with the economic growth we are experiencing at the present time. Second, there is no program of effective action to combat chronic unemployment, especially in certain areas. Third, there is no definition of a coherent policy indicting that the government recognizes the dramatic and important new trading patterns and policies that are now taking shape in Europe, and the opportunities and the challenges which these changes represent for this country.

Fourth, after two years of indecision and procrastination, confusion and contradiction, there is still no statement of an intelligible Canadian defence policy, especially whether Canada is or is not to have nuclear arms. This omission—and I should like to say a few words about it—merely confirms the shocking refusal of the government to make up its mind on defence policy, especially on the use of nuclear weapons. With all the confidential and secret information at its command, it delays, doubts and procrastinates. Yet it attacks the opposition, which has not the responsibility for policy and has never been given any of the confidential information on which policy must be based, for not finally and dogmatically laying down policy in this field. Could there possibly be a more complete abdication of governmental responsibility? The government spokesmen, when they speak—and let us remember that they speak with ministerial responsibility, each one of them—contradict each other and indeed they contradict themselves.

The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Harkness) agrees that nuclear warheads alone make sense for some of the arms we now have secured. Statements have been made confirming that these arms will have nuclear warheads, and other statements that they will not have them. Other statements have been made saying that no decision will be reached as long as the disarmament conference is proceeding or as long as there is a chance for a nuclear test ban or as long as there is no deterioration of the international situation. "We will make up our minds after these other things happen."

At the United Nations, on the other hand, reflecting presumably the view of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada voted for a resolution, opposed by most