

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

defending his program he was doing something other than smiling when he met his constituents.

The other priority which is absolutely essential for the Government of Canada to follow as a basic principle is to begin to rebuild the concept of genuine partnership among the major elements of Canadian federalism.

My concept of federalism, and it is the concept of this party, accepts that there can be and there should be strong provinces along with a strong central government. Unlike the Prime Minister, I do not see them as alternatives to each other. I am not afraid of Maurice Duplessis, or Peter Lougheed, or Gerry Reagan, or Robert Bourrassa—

An hon. Member: What about Claude Wagner?

● (1550)

Mr. Clark: The fear and concern of the hon. member for Ste. Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) is reserved to members on the opposite side of the House and not those on this side.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: As I indicated earlier, a partnership depends on trust, and if the government has done anything during the past few years, it has been to shatter any feeling of trust among its partners in Canadian society. Who can trust a prime minister who governs by surprise, who changes the rules in the middle of the night, who piles unilateral decision on unilateral decision, and whose only consistent rule of operation seems to be to do today what he said he would not do yesterday?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: At the bottom line that is what is wrong with this country and with this government. We have national leaders in this government whom the people of Canada, the provinces of Canada, business, labour, and the other partners simply cannot trust and the tragedy is that unless the deflections continue and unless the cabinet continues to trickle away, we are stuck with this government for another two years. I hope for Canada's sake that this government will mend its ways and change its direction.

I wish for Canada's sake that I could look at the throne speech and say that the government is changing, but in all conscience, and particularly on the record of the document read yesterday, I cannot, and I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Ste. Hyacinthe, that the following be added to the Address:

We respectfully affirm to Your Excellency that the Speech from the Throne is a further example of the opportunism which has cost the present administration its credibility among the people of Canada and that your ministers no longer enjoy the confidence of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Clark.]

Mr. Trudeau: —the applause which greeted the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) from his side of the House and the applause which then succeeded it, I think, indicates that all in this House are happy for the tone which has been set for the oncoming session by the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly hon. members on this side and you, Mr. Speaker, I am sure, will welcome the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to open the session in such a constructive way, following the tradition, naturally, of disagreeing with the content of the Speech from the Throne, but doing so with very compelling rhetoric, and I must say, devastating wit which leaves us on this side so much crushed! I do not think I will be able to emulate him. My speech will not be as funny and perhaps will be a little shorter, but on at least one point I want to agree with him, and that is on the statement he made at the outset about the mover and seconder, from whom we heard contributions yesterday.

[*Translation*]

I would like to congratulate the hon. Member for Restigouche, one of the two newest members of the House, and the hon. member for Lafontaine, the youngest member, for the eloquence with which they moved and seconded the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The presence of such outstanding young men among us demonstrates the ever-renewed vitality of the House of Commons, as well as its ability to reflect the varied regional and cultural concerns of Canadians.

It was a year ago today, Mr. Speaker, that I spoke to the people of Canada, announcing the government's decision to apply price and income controls.

It has been a year of difficulty and achievement for Canada. The greatest of those achievements is the way most Canadians have responded to the challenge to share the burden of restraint. It is because of that response that I am able to report today, twelve months later, that inflation has become a less disruptive, less threatening force in our lives.

That it remains the single most dangerous obstacle to economic stability cannot be denied. That is why the controls program must continue. That is why it is so important for the people of this country to keep on sharing the restraint which is our best hope for renewed strength and growth.

Of the key groups of Canadians whose support has been vitally necessary to the success of the anti-inflation program, only two groups have been total disappointments to the people of this country. I am referring of course to the members of the two major opposition parties in this House.

While some businessmen were opposed to the program from the beginning, the great majority of those who own and manage the many thousands of large and small business enterprises in Canada have done what was expected of them in helping to make the program work. While the executive of the Canadian Labour Congress adopted the position that everyone except organized workers should restrain their demands upon the economy, most of those workers themselves, in their hundreds of thousands, support the program and have agreed to settlements within the guidelines.