

*The Address—Mr. Fortin*

failed to obtain a majority. And the question is asked, who will lead the country?

• (2110)

Mr. Speaker, I will say, using perhaps a picturesque language—I may be teasing you in passing—that all this shows that the basic problem in our country is not a problem of language, of a lack of will to work, of a lack of desire to co-operate in building our country, but an economic and monetary problem. As long as we will find it amusing to divide ourselves on superficial questions and the problem of distribution of wealth is not tackled, as long as English Westerners will keep their wheat the French-speaking people will claim that it is the fault of the English-speaking who will say "Goddam French power", and we will not get anywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to reflect on that question and try "together", as a certain slogan that became fatal said, to think about it and come up with positive conclusions. Let us help and set examples for one another in parliament by stopping attacking one another, dirtying one another under the cover of national unity and let us really tackle the problems.

Mr. Speaker, for four years, from 1968 to 1972, this government enjoyed a majority and did so arrogantly. At a given point, the guillotine was brought down on us under Standing Orders 75A, 75B and 75C to avoid answering our questions. I also remember the famous roster system for ministers during the question period and a number of similar situations where members of the opposition were ignored. Now, after the election it is strange to see ministers recognize and salute us. The Progressive Conservatives recognize and salute us. I cannot understand why. And the government has become more conciliatory with the provinces. We realize more and more, as a colleague from the Liberal party said, that there was a time when the government used to propose and dispose, but now the government proposes and the House disposes. Here we are on our two feet again under a totally democratic regime. It feels good for a young member finally to breathe some democratic air in the House.

Mr. Speaker, we hope that our work and our proceedings—and we hope that legislation will be brought in as soon as possible—will enable us to prove to the people that members are serious, that they work and produce. The Canadian population is expecting great things from us: it expects us to come to grips with real problems.

In view of the election result, I contend that it is not the Progressive Conservatives, the New Democratic Party or the Créditistes who have defeated the government but rather the bureaucrats who in their ivory tower believe that they can do anything and who do not give a hoot about what people want.

Let us think for one moment: should those who do not understand the act on unemployment insurance—let us assume it is good—should they apply it? The members and the civil servants must understand the act. The same could be said of old age security pensions, family allowances and all government programs. We are told about creating jobs, LIPs, wonderful programs, so they say. I have in mind two projects that were accepted a month ago. The civil servants called the interested parties and

[Mr. Fortin.]

told them they could go ahead, that they would receive some money. They launched their projects and have been working for nothing since. At the same time, the Department of National Revenue wrote to them asking them to pay income tax on the salaries paid.

People come to see us. They ask what to do. Simple: the civil servants of one department are as stupid as those of another. That is what it proves, Mr. Speaker.

I may be a little blunt but time has come to quit fooling around and reach an understanding.

The government will have to show some maturity, act responsibly and call its civil servants to order. Whatever the advantages may be of the bills passed in this House, if the government does not train the civil servant who applies them, the Canadian people will continue to be served as badly as it now is; and there will surely be no change.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, that important point should also be considered. I do not wish to monopolize the time of the House any longer, for I am eager to start studying the bills the government seems to have the intention of putting before us. But before closing, I should like to call the attention of my colleagues on a particular point.

There is a proposal to extend the limits of our electoral districts, to redraft the electoral map—if one wishes, one can put in claims—in order to nearly double the area of ridings.

Mr. Speaker, the Lotbinière riding for instance includes three provincial counties: Arthabaska, Nicolet and Lotbinière. According to the new map, Quebec's representation would be reduced from 74 to 72 members and almost all of Mégantic county would be added to the Lotbinière riding. If we consider for a moment the number of provincial members in my riding, we find there are three at the present time, and according to the new map there will be four, each having two secretaries and an office.

We of the Federal Parliament serve the same population as these three members and we have neither an office nor a secretary in the constituency, and no telephone link with Parliament. This is absolutely ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, one could think we still live in Noah's era. Nobody seems to be interested in that problem.

By re-electing 15 Social Creditors, the Canadian population is teaching a lesson to my opponents. The former Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) and many others have paid a visit to me and to the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) who thanked them for their visit by saying that they were a great help to him, leaving him free to go and help other Creditiste candidates.

In spite of the predictions, more Social Credit members were elected. The members of this House should realize that the Social Credit vote has increased and that it will continue to increase. Why? Because the Social Credit members, since 1962, have given a lesson to the other members. We may not have diplomas as the other members, but we are hard-working. In our constituencies, in our offices, we look after our people every week-end. We ask for their views, we send them circulars; they give us