

*The Address—Mr. Broadbent*

real, and I think legitimate, matter of concern for Canadians to preserve a distinctive Canadian society and Canadian nationhood. I hope we have heard the last of the kind of argument that he presented this afternoon against those who argue for a positive form of Canadian nationhood. I should like now to get into the main body of my comments.

The Speech from the Throne, in the opinion of some members, had some quaint and inappropriate phrases. I do not see them as such. There was a reference to a society as necessarily being "inspired by love and compassion" if it is to be worthy of the name of society. Further on, the same document calls for a society "which encourages imagination and daring, ingenuity and initiative". Again, in the text, there is reference to the importance of developing in Canada a spirit of friendship amongst our people.

Depending on the source, this kind of phraseology could be seen as merely platitudeness or as a genuine expression of some deeply felt intention, the kind of phrase that one now finds Rotarians and Socialists alike using. One has to make an assessment of the source in order to reach a serious judgment about the intent behind the phrase. I do not dismiss in any cynical fashion phrases of this nature which are found in the Speech from the Throne. To try to build a society with many of the characteristics of friendships, one which is conducive to producing people that are imaginative and daring, is something we should all try to achieve. What we should do now is pass serious judgment on the government's performance; how well it has established its record and decide whether it is to be believed to be likely to act to implement these goals.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has established himself very clearly as one of the most powerful Prime Ministers in Canadian history. He has the largest staff of any Prime Minister in Canadian history. He has established regional desks. He has reasserted the principle of cabinet solidarity and secrecy and has streamlined the organization of cabinet. All of these changes I think are desirable. All should contribute to effective government. In addition, the Prime Minister has improved or expanded his position of influence in the country by very effective and adept use of television and by very intelligently planned, well spaced trips around the country. He has communicated with the people of Canada. He has attempted to justify what he is doing. He has built his personal popularity and, therefore, his power as Prime Minister.

All of this taken together has established the Prime Minister as the most powerful head of government in Canada since Mackenzie King. I find nothing undesirable about what he has done to build up his position of power within the cabinet and within the office of the Prime Minister. In my view, it is constitutionally legitimate. From a democratic point of view it is quite sound.

The serious question we must put to the Prime Minister is not how he has built up his power, since that is essentially trivial for a man seriously concerned about

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what is taking place in Canadian society, but how he is using that power to bring about the objectives stated in the Speech from the Throne presented to the members of this House and to the Senate. That is the serious question. If we are going to pass judgment or make Canadians guess about what this government is likely to do, the best we can do is look at its record in this area.

● (4:50 p.m.)

The Prime Minister has been in office over two years. He has had plenty of time to clearly establish for us and the people of Canada a certain pattern of behaviour and to establish certain expectations about what he is likely to do in the way of implementing the serious and desirable goals alluded to in the Speech from the Throne. I suggest that in the last two years the Prime Minister has accomplished almost nothing which could be described as contributing to these ends. We have seen during that period only four complex bills, two of which were hangovers from the previous Liberal administration. The first was the languages bill, a desirable item in the main and one which was accepted by the majority in all parties. The second was the omnibus bill amending the Criminal Code. Again, most parts of this measure were accepted by majorities in all the parties. I repeat, each of these pieces of legislation was a hangover from the Pearson administration.

The only other measures of any complexity introduced in more than two years of government were the Regional Development Incentives Act and the Canada Water Act. The first was good in principle and this party supported it, but the amount of money devoted to making it effective in the areas of Canada which most need assistance was about enough to buy a weekly subscription to a newspaper for every poor person in Canada. The Canada Water Act, a quaint piece of legislation which took up many weeks of parliamentary time last session was deficient in two crucially important areas. In the first place, it failed to set universal standards for pollution control; amendments which would have rectified this error were put forward on behalf of the New Democratic Party but were turned down. Second, the bill contained nothing which would have obliged the cabinet to bring before this House any proposal for the export of Canadian water to the United States. The New Democratic Party put forward an amendment which would have made this procedure mandatory, but again the Liberal government in its wisdom turned it down.

This, in my view, is the legislative record of the Trudeau government in the past two years. Let us turn, now, to an examination of the government's record in terms of policy decisions. I suggest it is, if anything, worse. Consider something which is very real and very important to millions of Canadians—housing. I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that at the present time 20 per cent of Canadian homes lack flush toilets and another 20 per cent lack either a shower or a bathtub. In metropolitan Toronto alone, 22,000 families are on the waiting list for public housing right now. In terms of housing, in the opinion of the Canadian Welfare Council, and I am quoting, there is