

Mr. VanHorne — March 17

necessary out-of-pocket expenses made by him in connection with the defence of the accused person, including costs of investigation, witness fees and travelling expenses;

(j) that a director will be appointed by the New Brunswick Barristers' Association, after consultation with the Attorney General, to supervise and manage the operation of the system;

(k) that the director or assistant director may refuse legal aid in any case, subject to a right of appeal to an advisory committee;

(l) that assistant directors may be appointed in each judicial district and an advisory committee be appointed by the New Brunswick Barristers' Association which will organize and supervise the operation of the plan, including rosters of lawyers prepared to participate in the system.

Reports Tabled

Hon. Mr. MacCALLUM tabled the Annual Report of the Department of Youth and Welfare for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1966.

Reports to Committees

Hon. Mr. ROBICHAUD moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. DesBRISAY, that the accounts of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission be referred to the committee on public accounts.

Extension of Time

Hon. Mr. ROBICHAUD moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. DesBRISAY, that the time for filing petitions for private bills without payment of additional fee be extended to Friday, April 14, 1967.

Address Debate

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM, resuming the debate on the speech from the throne, spoke as follows:
Mr. Speaker:

This session of the 45th Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick opens on a note of pleasure and a note of sadness.

We express our loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and we rejoice that this year she will visit Canada to share in the celebration of our 100th birthday.

We know that Canadians of goodwill everywhere will make her welcome. We this year remind ourselves of the blessings we have enjoyed through our association with the British Crown. Our only regret in New Brunswick is that she and her husband will not be able, during their trip, to come to this Picture Province so that we could personally express our regard and our loyalty.

Her Majesty will visit Quebec and Ontario, the largest of the founding provinces of this Confederation. In doing so, she will serve as a reminder to all of the benefits which have been ours as a result of the Confederation of the British North American colonies.

Anyone who reads the Confederation debates is struck by the fact that it was largely the French-speaking members from Lower Canada who spoke of the value of our British connection.

Sir Etienne-Pascal Taché on Feb. 3, 1865, speaking as Prime Minister and moving the Confederation resolution, said he would first address himself to what he considered the intrinsic merits of the scheme of Confederation and he would therefore say that if we were anxious to continue our connection with the British Empire and to preserve intact our institutions, our laws and even our remembrances of the past, we must sustain the measure. If the opportunity which now presented itself were to be allowed to pass unimproved, whether we would or would not, we would be forced into the American Union by violence, and if not by violence, would be placed upon an inclined plane which would carry us there insensibly. In either case the result would be the same. In our present condition we would not long continue to exist as a British colony.

Later in his speech he returned to the same theme. He said that if we desired to remain British and monarchical and if we desired to pass to our children these advantages, this measure, he repeated, was a necessity.

We of both founding races therefore welcome our Queen to Canada and to our 100th birthday celebrations.

In New Brunswick we will welcome the Queen Mother. In this we

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

are delighted. Each of us remembers the dark years of 1939 to 1945 and each of us will always cherish the memory of the unfailing gracious cheerfulness with which she shared the troubles of those years, so we are delighted that she should join us in July.

We are happy, Mr. Speaker, that the Queen's representative in New Brunswick, the Lieutenant-Governor, should have been able to read the speech from the throne himself this year. We pray that his health will continue to improve and that he will enjoy many more years with us.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this opening was delayed for reasons of which we are all too keenly aware.

The late Governor-General, we unanimously acknowledge, was one of those fortunate citizens who moved freely in all of Canadian society. His example of free acceptance of the French and English traditions in our heritage will remain before us. We all mourn and honor him, and it is time that we followed his example.

It is fitting that the speech from the throne should have made reference to the creation of a government translation service and of simultaneous translation services for the Legislature.

Any person who writes a letter knows the care with which words must be committed to paper. I marvel sometimes at the patience shown by French-speaking New Brunswickers, that they should be willing and should have the capability to write in a language not their own, so that those of us less gifted should read and understand. It will be of assistance to those persons that hereafter each person may use his own familiar tongue without fear of being misunderstood.

Anyone who has struggled to prepare a speech must marvel, too, at those who are willing and able to prepare that speech in a language not their own. The addition, therefore, of simultaneous translation services should enable any New Brunswicker to speak in this house in his own tongue.

The creation of a translation service and simultaneous translations are logical steps in New Brunswick.

A. Carle Smith, of Saint John, in

his delightful book "The Mosaic Province of New Brunswick" points out, and I quote:

"In 1960, Louis Robichaud, a young lawyer from Richibucto, in Kent County, was elected Premier of New Brunswick. Robichaud, at 34, the youngest Premier in New Brunswick history, swept his Liberal party into power with 31 of the 52 seats in the Provincial Parliament.

"So now the colourful Acadian piece can be added to the New Brunswick mosaic. And it is fitting that they who have been here so long should be a part of the whole; yet ever remaining themselves — and that is fitting too."

That struggle, to be part of the whole province, yet respecting and retaining their own identity and values, should be applauded by us all.

I am proud of my Scottish heritage. I have no wish to forget that part of me, not even on this day, when we all honor the adventurous Irish, and, Mr. Speaker, on this day when we all wear the green, although he's not St. Patrick, I am sure you would want me to honor Patrick Guerette who sits behind me and who celebrates a birthday today.

Mr. Speaker, the English, the Irish, the Indian, all of us, can see and applaud those things of value in our own ancestry.

We are no less Canadian for being proud of our respective traditions. Ignoring or suppressing our backgrounds would not make us more Canadian. We are not Canadian at all and we have destroyed the essential element of Canadians if we spend our days trying to suppress all those of different tradition, or resist their efforts to become better Canadians by their own route.

Family harmony cannot be pushed. It must grow. Mutual respect cannot be legislated. It comes of honest self-respect combined with respect for the identity of each other. I applaud and support, as this government applauds and supports any steps which make living easier and more relaxed for any group of our population.

I am not bilingual, but I would not want to be thought a second-class citizen because of that. When

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

I consider my stammering efforts at expressions in French, I cannot help marveling at the success in English of my French-speaking colleagues. At those times, too, I support more strongly every effort to assist communication by those who may feel hesitant in English, as I do in French.

Our harmony to date, particularly during a period just past when disharmony has been widely publicized, is a credit very largely to Premier Louis J. Robichaud.

He first of all showed the ability necessary to lead a party which represents all the people of New Brunswick. The people of all ethnic groups, of all economic groups, of all areas, have found support and understanding under his leadership. It has not been a facade of understanding, it has been a fact, well documented and well established over almost seven years as Premier.

He has shown, too, that ability to understand and support all groups does not mean that everything can be done to the satisfaction of everyone, every time.

Monsieur l'Orateur, je ne suis pas bilingue. Cependant, je ne suis pas citoyen de deuxième classe pour cette raison. Quand je pense à mes efforts et mes bégaiements pour parler français, je m'émerveille du succès de mes collègues français à parler l'anglais. J'appuie donc fortement les efforts de ceux qui veulent aider les bonnes communications, même s'ils ont de la difficulté à parler l'anglais tout comme j'hésite en parlant le français.

Il y a six mois, j'ai été à Montréal. A Montréal, M. l'Orateur, tout le monde parle français, et je me suis décidé de parler français moi aussi. En taxi de l'aéroport à l'hôtel, j'ai pensé, "Si je parle comme Wendell Meldrum, ce ne sera pas assez bon. Je parlerai comme Jean Lesage."

Après avoir parlé français un peu au chauffeur, il me dit, "Monsieur Meldrum, vous parlez français très bien, vous parlez comme Jean."

"Comme Jean Lesage?"

"Non, Monsieur Meldrum, vous parlez français comme Jean Diefenbaker!"

M. l'Orateur, c'est au crédit du Premier Ministre Louis Robichaud

et du parti libéral d'avoir maintenu l'harmonie entre les groupes de la province.

Il est le premier ministre de tout le peuple et le parti libéral est le vrai parti du peuple, pas le parti de l'argent, pas le parti des gros intérêts, mais le parti des pauvres et des riches, du peuple des fermes et des villes, des français et des anglais, le peuple du nord, du sud et du centre de cette province.

Le premier ministre comprend et sympathise avec les travailleurs et les parents de notre province, et le parti libéral parle pour toutes les races et toutes les régions.

On est le parti du peuple, M. l'Orateur, pas du peuple qui désire influencer un gouvernement, pas du peuple qui donne les grosses sommes pour les élections, pas du peuple qui désire prendre à sa charge les magasins des liqueurs, pas de ceux-là, mais de toute la population de la province. Ceci est le parti libéral sous notre premier ministre.

Tous les cirques, tous les ski-dooos et les chapeaux de cowboy, toute la politique Américaine ne change pas ce fait.

Louis Robichaud comprend le peuple. Il reste chez-nous dans les bons temps et les mauvais temps. Il est un vrai et un grand chef.

English Translation

Mr. Speaker, I am not bilingual, but I would not want to be thought a second-class citizen because of that. When I consider my stammering efforts at expressions in French, I cannot help marveling at the success in English of my French-speaking colleagues. At those times, too, I support more strongly every effort to assist communication by those who may feel hesitant in English, as I do in French.

Six months ago, I went to Montreal. There, Mr. Speaker, as you know, everyone speaks French, so I decided to speak French also. While in the taxi driving from the airport to the hotel, I thought, "If I speak like Wendell Meldrum, this will not be good enough. I will speak like Jean Lesage."

After carrying on a short conversation with the taxi driver, he said, "Mr. Meldrum, you speak very good French, you speak like Jean."

"Like Jean Lesage?"

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

"No, Mr. Meldrum, you speak French like 'Jean' Diefenbaker!"

Mr. Speaker, the harmony which exists between the groups of our province is a credit to Premier Robichaud and to the Liberal party.

Premier Robichaud is the Premier of all the people and the Liberal party is the true party of the people, not the party of the rich or of the vested interests, but the party of the poor as well as the rich, of the rural as well as the urban population, of the French and the English, of the people in every part of this province.

Our Premier has shown understanding of the problems of our people and the Liberal party speaks for all ethnic groups and all areas of the province.

Mr. Speaker, our party does not represent only the people who would influence the government, those who subscribe large sums of money for elections and those who would take over the Government Liquor Stores, but all the people of New Brunswick. This is the Liberal party under our Premier.

All the circuses, all the ski-dooos and all the cowboy hats, all the American politicking changes nothing in regard to this fact.

Louis Robichaud understands the people. He stays here with us in good as well as in bad times. He is a true and great leader.

True leadership, Mr. Speaker, has been displayed by our Premier, and the Liberal party reproduces it. It requires courage — the courage to say no when the hard facts require it. It requires compassion — the compassion which sees a need and says yes to that need whenever circumstances permit it. It requires vigor — the vigor and enthusiasm to try to improve the lot of every citizen by every means honorably available to elected representatives of the people.

That vigor showed itself in the speech from the throne. After two years of the busiest, heaviest legislative program in New Brunswick's history, and while the government is involved night and day in the implementation of the program, the speech from the throne moves on. It presents a comprehensive pack-

age for citizens, for the community, a package that would have been big in normal times. It is wonderful, following as it does the tremendous programs of the past couple of years. The people who watched the rugged sessions of the past two years might well marvel, but even more the opposition who sat through them and fought progress so bitterly might well marvel.

Mr. McCAIN: Boo!

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: There should be no marveling, no amazement. The job we were elected to do requires continuous work and improvement. This is no time for resting on our oars. New Brunswick is on the move; the job of government is to help keep it moving. This session, a session for citizen and community, will keep New Brunswick moving.

Mr. Speaker, the industrial development of New Brunswick, the progress in modernizing local government, the new aura of hope for a bright future, have made it possible for many New Brunswickers to return to their native province. We welcome them back.

Naturally, we welcome the Leader of the Opposition and congratulate him on his recent election victory. I urge him not to be too disappointed in that victory.

Mr. VanHORNE: Don't you be either.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: True, he expected a 10,000 vote majority, and when one considers the myth he has succeeded in building of himself, he might have expected that majority, but still he should be grateful that his constituents have made it possible for him to come in and sit down.

Mr. VanHORNE: We had to aim high to overcome the slurs and the arrows.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: I urge him, too, not to consider it a defeat simply because Dr. Savoie did not lose his deposit. True, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that he would consider it such a defeat, but still we would not want him to come into this house feeling downcast and defeated before he started.

Mr. VanHORNE: Don't worry, we're not.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Cheer up, you did get elected.

March 17

Mr. VanHORNE: Don't worry. We did, and we will again.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Things aren't so bad for you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask hon. members not to interrupt a member who has the floor.

Point of Order

Mr. VanHORNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think the Hon. Minister of Education should be talking sense and not nonsense.

Address Debate

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!
Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Mr. Speaker, I assure you the Hon. Leader of the Opposition should cheer up, because he did get elected, and things aren't so bad for him.

Mr. STAIRS: Send him over a razor, Charlie.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Mr. Speaker, things could get worse for him. As a matter of fact, they will get worse soon.

Mr. STAIRS: They'll get worse for you, Scarface.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Mr. Speaker, Tom Bell was right, at least in part. The man he nominated for party leader is irresponsible. He showed it clearly yesterday in the house. Instead of a reasoned address, we received only a hash and fantasy — the hash and fantasy we have come to expect from the hon. member opposite.

Mr. VanHORNE: It sure shows your folly.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: In recent weeks we have been told that the Conservative party will be drafting a new platform at a platform convention in April. Therefore, I suppose it is clear to all that at present the Conservative party doesn't have a platform. They don't have a program. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition may be predetermining the action of those who will attend the convention. It is plain that those attending will rubber-stamp whatever is put before them. Any debate will be poor, or rather, pure window dressing. "Poor" window dressing is what I started to say, and perhaps that was right.

That fact is indicated from the Opposition Leader's remarks during a Freetime Political Affairs broad-

cast 10 days ago. At that time he was instructing the Conservative party on how to behave, and telling Conservatives what they should say.

Mr. VanHORNE: Keep out of the ditch.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Here are his words: "Make sure the speakers know what they are going to talk about." Wouldn't it have been nice if the Opposition Leader had heeded his own words yesterday? "Make sure the speakers know what they are going to talk about."

Point of Order

Mr. VanHORNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order — — —

Hon. Mr. WEBBER: Can't take it, eh, Charlie?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. VanHORNE: — — — may I inquire from the Chair if this is the Hon. Minister of Education who is in charge of education for the province?

Hon. Mr. WEBBER: You can't take it, Charlie!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Address Debate

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Mr. Speaker, here are his words, and I repeat: "Make sure the speakers know what they are going to talk about." That is good advice. "Make sure that everything they say is entirely in line with our program and in line with the objectives of the rally."

So, hon. members, there are your instructions. Get in line. Keep in line. Keep in line with a program that doesn't exist. Keep in line with the program you don't have.

Mr. VanHORNE: Where did you get that nonsense about a program that doesn't exist?

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: You said it. Mr. VanHORNE: Who wrote that speech for you?

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: I quote the Leader of the Opposition: "Get in line. Keep in line." Free expression is no longer allowed opposite. Get in line, gentlemen opposite, with your leader. Freedom of speech and responsible judgment have no place in the new, irresponsible wing of the Conservative party, the wing your leader obviously represents.

Mr. STAIRS: You couldn't follow your own leader's line.

March 17

Mr. HORTON: You sure are the Phyllis Diller of the Tantramar!

Mr. VanHORNE: Couldn't you keep your leader out of the ditch long enough to follow him?

Mr. STAIRS: He didn't have a ski-doo.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Members who have already spoken in this debate were given the courtesy of being listened to without interruption. I would ask that they give the same courtesy to other speakers in this debate.

Mr. VanHORNE: Mr. Speaker, the other speakers in the debate were

Hon. Mr. LeBLANC: Order! You don't know any better, anyway.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a depressing display. Today, the display opposite is also depressing. For six years the government looked for a spark of responsibility from the opposition. It found some, but too often members opposite showed a parochialism which denied any knowledge of the problems of the province as a whole.

Occasionally, as in the case of the former leader, a man of integrity showed. Too often his example was repudiated and finally his leadership was repudiated. What followed? The humiliation of the responsible wing of the party because it showed a reasoned policy and responsible image.

What did the opposition choose? What did we see yesterday? A demagogue. My father would have said of yesterday's speaker, "He has a wonderful memory. He can remember things that didn't even happen!"

Yesterday we were treated to a hash of half-truths and of plain fiction. The faction of the party which was represented yesterday understands demagoguery, because a demagogue is a person who can rock the boat and then pretend there is a storm at sea.

Where did the speaker get his ideas? They weren't facts. Where did he get his fictions? Where has the "Gros cowboy de California" been hiding?

"We want a minimum salary scale for teachers," the opposition now says.

Mr. VanHORNE: We want increased salaries for teachers.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Where were they when teachers' salaries went up 14% throughout the province? Where was his party when the teachers in Restigouche County received a salary increase? Where were they when over 80% of the province's teachers — in Saint John, St. Stephen, Moncton, Edmundston, Dalhousie, Campbellton — received salary increases?

He can be excused if he doesn't know what happened in the years after he announced that he had "done all he had set out to do," and then scurried away, but to be unconscious of what happened on Jan. 1 seems to me pretty dull.

So the party is in favor of better pensions for teachers? Will someone tell the opposition that teachers and government discussed, and this Legislature passed a new pension Act in this last session?

The figurehead who has been brought back and promoted to spokesman for the opposition can be excused if he has lost touch with New Brunswick during his exile in a far country. Now, like the prodigal son, he is remembering that things are much better in his own country, and he has come home.

Mr. VanHORNE: We're going to make things better.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: We remind him that he doesn't have to scurry off to Montreal, or New York, or Toronto. Stay in New Brunswick, you will find things have improved under a government of action. While the opposition slept in the sun or in its seat, the province has moved ahead.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be proper for me to fail in my duty to discuss further the government's education plans. I'm proud of them. I'm optimistic about our prospects of improvement.

As members know, there have been no school closings under the new program yet. There have been some shifts of classes. There have been improvements in the bus service. There will be more.

For the time being, any bus or school inconvenience is the very thing we are trying to correct. That improvement is the very thing the opposition fought. The greatest dangers now to school improvement

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

are those very demagogues who distort facts and who build fears which will, in fact, delay education.

Mr. GUERETTE took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: The speaker yesterday commented on my letter of Feb. 17 addressed to school boards and superintendents. Members may be interested in knowing the contents of that letter:

I said that we had now moved six weeks into a program of educational reform and improvement which has the eyes of educators across Canada fixed upon us in this province. We had therefore accepted our responsibility to our own people and to education in all of Canada. We are leading the nation in school improvement and reorganization. If we fail to make this program work, we fail both our own people and the rest of the nation.

The responsibilities of school boards in this matter are twofold. First, there is the responsibility to the children and to education. This requires that the children in each school district receive the best possible education that the funds available can provide. It means better schools and better teachers.

Members of interim school boards, who have the responsibility for planning the education future of their communities, have been doing a good and conscientious job in this respect.

This duty to education also includes a duty to make that education and the changes palatable to and understood by the community. Unless the public in each area understands what school boards are doing and why, members of the public will not accept the changes and will, in fact, reject the improvements that can mean so much to the community and to the province.

This is not a criticism of the public. It is a simple statement of the fact that in a democracy the public has a right to know what is going on. School boards will therefore fail education and will fail in the providing of education if they do not take time to give full explanation of their

actions to the members of their community.

This, of course, is part of the second responsibility of school boards — that is, the responsibility to the community. School boards are representatives of the community as well as representatives of education. As such, they must be responsive to the fears and wishes of the people. If the people in any part of the community resist strongly the desire to change a particular part of the system, I ask that they should not push ahead with that change without reasonable discussion and explanation and without authority from the department for the individual change.

The changes cannot be made all at once. We are talking about a 10-year program and in that program it may be necessary to slow down the changes in some areas until the people have had an opportunity to see the benefits accruing to other areas as a result of the change. Dollars would not permit us to improve all conditions at once and it is therefore only sensible to act first in areas where the people are ready and understand what we, in education, are doing.

The above leads me to several detailed comments:

1. It has been called to my attention, accurately or not, that some boards are proposing to close schools and move pupils a fairly long distance. It has been stated and repeated policy that no child shall be required to be on a bus more than an hour each way, going to or coming from school. I insist, then, that no new bus routes be created unless they conform to this time limit.

Where pupils are now being transported for periods longer than the hour, every effort should be made to reduce the bus time for these pupils. It should be clearly understood that we cannot give permission to close any school if the closing will require children to be more than an hour on the bus each way, under normal conditions.

2. The closing of one-room and two-room schools is, of course, a priority matter and school boards should proceed with such

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

closing as rapidly as possible. Under normal conditions, school boards should not close or change classroom arrangements for junior and senior high schools where they now exist, except where the need is severe and where it is clearly understood by the citizens of the community.

Many members of the public do not understand or fully accept the need for larger school units. Until that understanding has been attained, boards should not act with undue haste. In this regard, it is perhaps suitable to repeat that we are talking of a 10-year program and not everything can or should be done at once and that school boards have a responsibility to explain the need for changes before the changes are made, not after the citizens of the community have become alarmed.

3. The initial proposals as to school sites and as to school board boundaries, while they are accepted as reasonable starting points, are not necessary final. As representatives of the people in your community, boards have a right to recommend changes in each of these matters. The department will welcome any recommended changes and will give serious consideration to the desires of superintendents, school boards and the public for improvement in the plans so far submitted.

The creation of the new school districts was a necessary administrative act. It should not be considered a final and irrevocable act by any means.

I do not want to slow down any board in its desire for improvement of education in its district. On the other hand, I am convinced that changes which are not explained or understood and which do not conform to the opinion and understanding of the majority of the community, will not, in the long run, be good for education but will, in fact, result in setbacks. These setbacks will result in our failing our duty to education in New Brunswick and in failing our responsibility as the present leader in education improvements in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday's speech would have to be called the opposition's Russian speech. It described our federal-provincial difficulties. I once told the story of the international gathering in which the group was asked to comment briefly on the subject of "The Elephant".

The Englishman is supposed to have said, "I say, really, old chap, the elephant does provide simply ripping sporting chances!"

The Frenchman declared, "Ze love life of ze elephant she is une grande phenomen."

The American described, "The simply top-notch chance to make a million bucks on those elephants, the ivory, hides, the whole deal, can't miss!"

The Canadian said, "Well, now, the first thing to decide is whether the elephant is a federal or provincial responsibility."

One of my audience kindly advised me that there was a fifth member of the party, a Russian. In his turn, he said:

"The elephant, ya, we Rawshuns inwented the elephant!"

And so, between Ivan Hornsky and Ego Popoff, the peaked Conservative party has been taken over by the "Rawshuns". They "inwented" the whole speech from the throne! Well, congratulations to them, it was a good speech. The person who "inwented" it deserves congratulations. The group who "inwented" that speech and the program that goes with it deserves to form this and the next government, and it will.

Hon. Mr. LEVESQUE and Govt. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at this point.

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: Members will be interested in the new book by Dr. James Conant, President of Harvard. In "The Comprehensive High School" he points out that the American tradition of local responsibility for financing public schools has created, to use his words, an "inequality of opportunity" that can only be resolved by shifting the burden to the states and by returning part of federal income taxes to the states.

If it is reasonable to support such a policy in the U. S. A., how much more necessary in New Brunswick.

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

The wealth of a community lies in its resources, including, first of all, its human resources. United States wealth is, to a large extent, a product of its greater emphasis on education.

At all levels the United States percentage of students taking higher education is just twice that of Canada, and we in New Brunswick are still lower than other parts of Canada.

The Conservative party, in resisting improvement, performs a terrible injury to our people.

In using all the tricks of a demagogue, members opposite make the work of the school boards twice as hard, and they would doom our people to become second-class citizens. That's where they obviously would keep our people and us all — second-class, underprivileged.

For shame! They would oppose progress for the purpose of attempted personal political gain, an attempt that will fail, Mr. Speaker, an attempt that will be rejected by the people of New Brunswick, in due course.

Hon. Mr. ROBICHAUD and Govt. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. MELDRUM: What are the Conservatives good at?

Last year they were champions at jumping to conclusions. They spent their time forecasting evil, reading their own and their supporters' propaganda and then reaching ridiculous conclusions from the propaganda.

Since then they've become even more spectacular gymnasts. Jumping to conclusions is a small part of their repertoire now.

For two years they fought the program for equal opportunity. If there was one thing no Conservative ever could stand, it was a fair chance for the underdog. They fought with every form of opposition they could muster inside and outside the house: delay, filibuster, threaten and propagandize.

What would they do with the program for equal opportunity? I quote the president of the Conservative party in New Brunswick: "We'd scuttle it. We'd throw it out. We'd scrap it."

Mr. Speaker, I never before saw such spectacular somersaults. What

a dramatic and what a fantastic turnover!

Today they say, "We were for it all the time. We wouldn't change a thing. Oh, just a few little things, like giving the towns and cities the right to assess land."

There it is again, the old rule, divide and conquer! Keep government units small and weak so that undertrained, underequipped staff can be bamboozled.

The only thing that even their hired experts could not criticize or disagree with, these men would undo. In fact, they would unravel the whole program, thread by thread, because they never understood it and because their backers hate any sign of fair opportunity for the little man.

Early in my service career I was impressed by a drill group which many training depots maintained and called a "precision squad". They were usually a pretty well drilled organization. They could march and wheel and halt and never miss a beat. They never got anywhere, just up and down and back and forth, and it was all show, but it made a good show.

Why it was necessary that a pilot, or a tank gunner, or a corvette navigator should have to learn "left incline" and "advance in column of route", or "tallest on the left, shortest on the right, in three-rank size" — and I usually wound up on the right when the shortest were measured — was never adequately explained to me, but tradition dies hard, so we all did the drill.

Nevertheless, the precision squad had one performance for show to the public. It involved a series of drills without shouted orders. They would march to the end of the square, then, all as one man, wheel and march to the other. It was all very impressive, but it was all show.

We have in recent months seen a repeat of the precision squad's about-face. One day they were marching straight-faced and resolute to fight equal opportunity, then "Hup, 2, 3, 4" and suddenly, as one man, the column turned. Without missing a step, without a change of expression, the members opposite now march in favor of the program they were so resolutely set against.

It is all show, all sham. When they think the moment proper, they

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

will wheel again. They will march and countermarch, and no New Brunswicker can tell when they will change direction or where they will pretend to head the next time.

Mr. Speaker, the government cannot afford such inconsistency and uncertainty, and New Brunswick cannot. We require a goal, a clearly stated goal and we require action, steady, unchanging action toward that goal.

The program for citizen and community provides such action. It is a logical sequel to the legislation of the past two years and provides the reasonable hope that our goal for the improvement of the lot of each New Brunswicker shall be attained.

It is appropriate that we should compliment Mr. Doucett for his early advocating of the position of ombudsman. The hon. member from Carleton, Mr. Hatfield, as well as urged such an appointment and I congratulate him. It is appropriate that responsible men, men of integrity and concern on both sides of the house, should see and point out the value of this protector of the public.

In every government mistakes occur. They are unavoidable, as the public demands more and more service, and as more and more people are involved in the decisions and the providing of those services, more and more the chance of error creeps in. The people will be better served because of the appointment of an ombudsman, and we are particularly concerned that the public should be served, not just by more people, but better served by the people involved.

The creation of a vast bureaucracy is feared by both government and the people. To prevent it will require vigilance by both government and the people.

Dr. Stephen Hurwitz, Denmark's first parliamentary commissioner or ombudsman, in his booklet on the office of ombudsman in 1962, summed up after six years' work, said that the office of the parliamentary commissioner in Denmark had proved to be an institution acknowledged by all sections of the Danish community as a natural and beneficial unit in our democratic form of government. Since the in-

stitution came into force in April 1955 and until now, there has been no serious public criticism and the viewpoints concerning the value of the institution which have been expressed in the press or in public meetings showed a desire for amplification rather than restriction of the powers of the parliamentary commissioner.

His experience, as the experience of others in Sweden and New Zealand, suggests that the existence of the office is as important as the service he performed.

Usually the investigations have shown that there was no basis for criticism of the civil servants or the service branch complained of. This does not mean that the complaints have been unreasonable. Since in many instances the administration gives no reasons for its decisions, and since the complainant does not often have sufficient knowledge of the basis for the decision in question, he often does not understand it. In many instances, by giving a detailed explanation of the whole matter, it has been possible for the parliamentary commissioner to make the complainant understand that the treatment of the case and the decision taken give no occasion for criticism.

In 10 to 15 per cent of the cases investigated, the commissioner found it necessary to criticize or make certain recommendations to the authorities concerned. This may perhaps seem a rather small percentage of the total number of cases investigated, but in evaluating the parliamentary commissioner's work, he took into consideration that it is not only the number of cases that is of interest, but also, and perhaps more important, the preventive influence exercised by his office on the administration.

Likewise, the Human Rights Commission, by its existence will serve to remind and to protect, even if it never needs to punish.

Members will be aware that the commission was advocated almost two years ago by the New Brunswick Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In the meantime, this Legislature has kept up a heavy program. Now, at the first reasonable opportunity, it was pleasing to hear from the Lieutenant-

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

Governor that the requests of this group and of the Canadian Citizenship Council shall soon bear fruit.

Racial, religious or any prejudices will not disappear from our midst by the creation of an Act or a commission. These are only steps on the way. The larger, more useful steps must come in the hearts of men.

Prejudice is born of fear, fear that someone will take our job, fear that we may lose face or look ridiculous, fear that conditions may change to our detriment.

We New Brunswickers too often are creatures of fear. In an age when we can look the world in the eye and need call no man our master, we fear.

It is a puzzling phenomenon. Watch the newspapers. The headlines often blare, "Someone Fears This" or "Loss Of Something Feared". We let our minds prey on the negative. Every time something bad happens, it is repeated, retold and embellished. Something good? Well, Mr. Speaker, through you, I would ask each member to go back through his past few weeks. A number of questions could produce some enlightening answers:

How many people did you praise? How many did you criticize? How often did you acknowledge something good or something of value? How often did you exaggerate the bad or the unfortunate incident?

We have much to be proud of and much to be happy for. It's time we started expressing that pride. Bad conditions must be pointed out, for the purpose of improvement. The good, too, needs to be recognized, so that we can build on it.

Are we less well off than some? In the last five years the cost of living in New Brunswick has increased 6.8%. Average wages have increased 21.7%, and Civil Service wages have increased 29.8%. We can build by continuing such progress.

Concern has been expressed for the disappearance of county councils. It is a fact that the changing times have changed the role local government must play.

During the last month or so, in discussing school problems in many parts of the province, I have met

officials of newly created local governments. These people express their pride at the confidence expressed in them by the people of their communities. More important, they are taking an optimistic and enthusiastic interest in the prospects of their new local government units, units which can usefully perform the local services required in the twentieth century.

While we exercise our habit of being pessimists and of crying over what is past, we do a real injustice to these people. They are now moving into useful positions and filling them with capability and with confidence.

Mr. Speaker, since I ask that people accent the positive, I must compliment the Telegraph-Journal of March 16 and Mr. Geoffrey Crowe for their page 5 article, headlined, "Let's All Stop Moaning And Cheer For Canada! A contented immigrant finds the good life is right here in New Brunswick."

We need not be Pollyannas, but we can realistically be optimists.

I claim for this government some credit for that reasonable optimism — encouragement to industry, improvement of schools, the best road maintenance program in the Atlantic region, concern for the common man — all expressed in action, continuous, steady action year in and year out, and as this speech from the throne shows, not flagging after seven years, but imaginative, vigorous and concerned.

And there is more to come. Members will not have failed to note and to commend both the hon. members, Mr. Doucett and Mr. Soucy, for proposing something new in each of their very excellent speeches: voting machines, and continuing improvement in the assistance to auxiliary classes.

It's easy to criticize. It's better to be constructive. This side of the house has constructive, not conservative people, and we are never satisfied. We will never say, "I've done all there is to do" and go sit in the sun.

Mr. Speaker, I look at New Brunswick and its future and I find nothing to cry about.

If we have less wealth than some, we have natural beauty and a way of life envied by many.

Hon. Mr. Meldrum — March 17

If we have tough days ahead, we have also the strength and the assets to meet those days.

If we have differences of opinion and outlook, we have also tolerance and understanding to live with the differences.

If we have a lot of work to do, we have the strength to do it and the knowledge that it is useful work that will pay dividends in the welfare and well-being of New Brunswickers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a New Brunswicker and I'm proud to be a member of this Legislature.

I'm proud of the speech from the throne and I'm anxious to get on with the work it promises. It promises work for us, but it guarantees improving conditions for the citizens of this province. I urge all members now to get on with that job.

Mr. AMES continued the debate, saying:

Mr. Speaker:

It is an esteemed honor and privilege to rise in this chamber to speak on behalf of the citizens of New Brunswick. Before continuing my remarks, I wish to congratulate you on the fair manner in which you presided over the proceedings of this assembly during the last session. That, in my opinion, is a most important qualification for one occupying the most honorable position of Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the passing of His Excellency Governor-General Georges P. Vanier, Canada and the free world sustained a great loss. He was a friend of all, a true defender of freedom. I can only humbly add my expression of sorrow and loss in the passing of this great Canadian soldier and statesman. His life of service and devotion to duty will always be his greatest monument.

During the past year New Brunswick sustained a great loss in the passing of Hon. Dr. Dumont. His was a life of service to humanity as he ministered to the sick and suffering. As Minister of Health, his memory will always be greatly respected for his fortitude and devotion to duty. To his family I express deepest sympathy.

Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne was delivered by His Honour

the Lieutenant-Governor in his usual gracious and dignified manner. I extend to His Honour best wishes for continued health and happiness.

At this point, Sir, I extend congratulations to the mover and second of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. They handled a hard task most skilfully as they undertook to defend the record of this government. The speech from the throne is written by the government, outlining its legislative program for consideration by the Legislature. The 1966 throne speech was notably short. The 1967 speech was notably long and empty of any constructive measures that would meet the aspirations and hopes of our people for a better New Brunswick.

Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne dealt at some length with educational matters. All our citizens are deeply interested in providing the best opportunities possible for a higher education for their children. This has always been the case ever since free schools have been established in New Brunswick. Sometimes progress has been slow, and certainly the past six years have been no exception, when we realize that the present government has spent the smallest percentage of its revenues on education of any province in Canada. Six years wasted, even though the need was greatest.

In this modern world we certainly cannot afford to stand still in the field of educational advancement. However, major changes in our school system should be worked out in full cooperation with teachers and parents. I believe that our New Brunswick teachers are second to none in Canada. This is borne out by the fact that New Brunswick schools in the past have produced great numbers of men and women who have become nationally and internationally famous in many fields of service and endeavor. I am sure that present-day teachers are excelling in their profession and that men and women will continue to leave our New Brunswick schools ready to occupy the highest positions in our nation.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1966 session of this Legislature a new Schools Act was passed. While there