

The Address—Mr. Andre

Request that environmental impact study be provided to expropriation hearings.

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to the speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I need not say what a thrill and honour it is to be here and to address this assembly during this throne speech debate. A few days ago the senior member among us, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) warned that we freshmen members, on the occasion of our maiden speech, would be making the hardest speech of our lives. I confess, Sir, that at the time I do not think I truly appreciated the significance of his warning; but as I stand here before you in this impressive chamber, with its great tradition of oratory of the highest calibre, an example of which we witnessed in the speech of the right hon. member for Prince Albert recently, I am beginning to appreciate the significance of his words.

As a freshman member I am, of course, very mindful of the great traditions of the House of Commons. In fact, Sir, as with all the members of the party to which it is my honour to belong, I am mindful and respectful of all our Canadian traditions, and particularly now the tradition of the throne speech debate. One of the pleasant traditions is to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the position of Speaker of this assembly. Those more senior than I have already commented on your record of fairness, humour and ability. I feel fortunate to be a member of this assembly with you, Sir, in the position that you occupy, particularly now, given the makeup of the House. May I also congratulate the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) on his elevation to the post of Deputy Speaker.

Another pleasant tradition, Mr. Speaker, is to compliment my fellow freshmen, the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, and this I do with pleasure. I cannot help but speculate that, but for a few dozen votes and 31 New Democrats, I might have performed that task and they mine.

It is also customary, Sir, to spend a few moments to talk about the constituency which a new member represents; of course it would give anybody great pleasure to talk about Calgary Centre. Before I talk of the people and places that make up this constituency, I should like to take a few moments to pay tribute to my predecessor; of course, I refer to Hon. Douglas S. Harkness. In a sense, Sir, I, as the new member for Calgary Centre, bear a double responsibility as compared to most new members, because anyone who sits in parliament for Calgary Centre will be judged against a standard of dedication to public service that has no equal. First in war, where he was decorated for bravery, then in parliament from 1945 to 1972, Doug Harkness has served Canada. I cannot aspire

[Mr. Speaker.]

to his distinction, nor could anyone equal this tradition; but I will try and honour it. Few people have served Canada as well and I know his presence in this assembly is already missed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: The constituency that Doug Harkness represented and that I now represent, Calgary Centre, as the name implies is the heart and core of that great city nestled at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. I will not try to describe my constituency because words alone, at least not the words of an engineer, could do it justice. Those who have not been there are the lesser for it and I would recommend most highly that they take the earliest opportunity to fill this void in their lives.

There is just one point I would like to raise in connection with my constituency, and that is in regard to the proposed federal government building for Calgary. I hope the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé) will give this matter his attention since the officials in his department are attempting to acquire a site which the people of Calgary would prefer as the site of a downtown park. The city of Calgary has been encouraging the federal government to locate its new building in the designated urban renewal area and here, Sir, we have an example of a lack of co-ordination by the federal government and its departments which is very difficult to understand and very disturbing. After spending millions of dollars on urban renewal and after encouraging virtually everybody else to expand or erect new buildings in that designated area, they now resist going there themselves. Of even more fundamental concern at least to me and to the people of Calgary, is the federal government's apparent lack of concern for the fact that the location they covet for the site of their building would destroy virtually the last possible site for a downtown park.

• (1700)

I hope that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) who, from his public statements at least, is apparently interested in the quality of life in our cities, will use his influence on the Minister of Public Works and the department officials to get them to change their minds; to reconsider their posture. We are not asking for a multi-million dollar federally funded downtown park, although in view of the established precedent, maybe we should. We are simply asking the federal government to erect this building in the urban renewal area and leave at least one small patch of greenery for the people of Calgary Centre, half of whom live in apartments.

This issue, Sir, is obviously not a major or principal issue to my constituents. They, like all Canadians, and probably more than most, are vitally concerned about Canada's future, Canada's unity, its independence, the poverty amidst plenty, unemployment at disastrously high rates, inflation and its effects on the elderly and those on fixed incomes and about all of those major problems facing Canada with which this government has been totally unable to deal.

The people of Calgary Centre are not, using that expression of the member for Rosedale (Mr. Macdonald), red-necks, reactionaries afraid of change. They welcome