

Therefore, when I went to the Senate to hear the Speech from the Throne, I noticed that the over-all focus of this Government was on deficit reduction, and that reducing the deficit is of vital necessity if Canada's economic well-being is to be secured.

I would like, first of all, to be on the record as an individual who believes in the importance of being fiscally responsible. However, I sense that deficit reduction has become such a tunnel-vision view that I fear it will overwhelm all other issues mentioned or not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I am also wondering why this Government, that is going to raise taxes and cut spending, never told the Canadian people during the election campaign.

Over the past four years Canadians have been subjected to the sharpest tax hikes in Canada's history. These increases were introduced in spite of promises to the contrary. The speech was deliberately vague on what tax changes might be expected, but very clear that the taxes will occur. I wonder why this Government cannot tell Canadians exactly what it intends to do instead of keeping Canadians in the dark.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bevilacqua: I conclude my remarks by saying that the Throne Speech needs to be seriously examined by all Canadians. There is no reference to federal programs for housing or disposable federal land holdings for affordable housing or how the courts will deal with the Youth Offenders Act. No timetable for legislation was given.

Having the honour of being appointed associate critic for youth, I would be remiss in not mentioning the greatest resource Canada has as being in fact our youth.

• (1600)

I firmly believe that all government policy should take into consideration the impact that it has on youth and the environment. We must continue to establish programs which encourage young people to acquire skills necessary to meet the future demands of our economy.

Drug use in Canada, especially among our youth, continues to rise. I strongly support drug prevention programs and increased law enforcement to bring this problem under control.

Finally, I want to congratulate all Members in the House on their election. Let them always be mindful of the responsibilities we have toward Canadians and to never forget that what we do and, more important, what we do not do, seriously affects the future of this country.

The Address—Mr. Bevilacqua

Canada is many people, many regions, many cultures and many ideas, with one thing in common: we all strive to attain economic and social justice. It is our responsibility to achieve it.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my colleague, the Member for York North (Mr. Bevilacqua), for his excellent speech. We waited a long time to have a colleague from York North after the election. It is quite evident that he was well worth waiting for. I am sure I speak on behalf of all my colleagues.

The Hon. Member stated how compassionate our society should be. I agree with that and everything he said in his speech.

The fourth fundamental objective listed by the Government in the Speech from the Throne is to foster a confident sense of Canada's culture and national uniqueness in which Canadians may have a greater sense of their common values and common citizenship.

As my colleague will know, this country was largely built against forces dragging us toward the United States. We have traditionally used such tools as the construction and maintenance of a national railway in order to keep the various parts of our country together.

I represent Glengarry, in which there is the town of Alexandria. It was founded by Father Alexander Macdonnell in the early 1800s. We have the Montreal to Ottawa rail line, and the Mayor of Alexandria has written a small poem about the potential closure of the rail line. I want to read it and ask my colleague about his impressions on the maintenance of a national railway.

The poem is as follows:

Have you ever heard the story
Of how Brian came to shame
I'll tell you so you'll understand
He is trying to scrap our trains

No wonder that we are proud of
Via Rail from sea to sea
And here's the way you politicians
Please! Just let it be.

Sure'n our families and our workers
Need a train that's bright and clean
Cause you see were are not Prime Minister
And we have no limousines.

We are proud to be Canadians
So please treat us all the same
You see we don't have buses
And we can't afford a plane

Oh the airways and the highways
Are quite crowded, use your brain
Shut them down, it seems it's your way
Then we'll get to keep our trains

Coast to coast we were united
By our railways great and grand
That is why we are so excited
Canada our native land.