

*Speech from the Throne*

ern Canadian entertainers must leave their homes to earn a living.

Each of these specific western complaints would be serious enough taken by itself. Each would, and does, cry out for action. But, taken together, the grievances which I have cited and the numerous others to which I have not made reference are in danger of turning into a mighty avalanche of discontent sweeping aside logic and reason in a tide of frustration and anger.

Western alienation is a fact. Western regional particularism is becoming one because the federal government, this government no less than its predecessors, have created no over-all plan for development for this nation, no national plan which would allow for natural and gradual reform rather than crisis management, long-range planning rather than patchwork policies. This government has not attempted to define the goals for Canadian society. This government and its predecessors have followed a policy of reacting rather than acting, of allowing the pot to simmer and boil until it overflows, at which point they have attempted to clamp on a jury-rigged lid. Instead of progressing in a well directed fashion down a well defined path, our governments have staggered erratically from near disaster to near disaster, patching here, repairing there, narrowly avoiding calamity.

In short, we have had, as I have said, government by crisis management, and in a crisis management situation it is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. In a crisis management situation, policy decisions are ultimately a product of counting noses in the House of Commons rather than a product of a rational decision based upon the good of the nation as a whole. This means 88 votes for Ontario, 74 for Quebec and only 45 votes for the Prairies. Even if British Columbia's votes are included in the latter count, the west is in a minority position and subject to control by central Canada.

It is for this reason that westerners are not participating in the direction of Canadian events even to the extent that would normally be dictated by their economic and social importance to the nation. It is for this reason that successive federal governments have shown themselves to be unsympathetic to, and generally ignorant of, western needs and aspirations. It is for this reason that policies of successive federal governments have demonstrated a total lack of understanding of the social and cultural idiosyncracies of the west where a strong social conservatism is coupled with increasing economic and political radicalism.

I have attempted to define the problem. What are the solutions? I deeply regret, although I am not at all sure that the House does, that time does not permit me to go into an examination of the solutions in the same detail as I have examined the problems. Let me just touch on some of the approaches which might be taken very briefly.

Some of the problems could be met through a new flexibility in constitutional arrangements which would permit each region of the country, not only the west, to establish a relationship with the federal government which accurately reflected the needs of the region and which was not based upon the puerile assumption adopted by the present government that all provinces and regions in this country are the same, that what is good for

[Mr. Rowland.]

one must be good for the others. In some cases this would mean centralization of powers, in others decentralization of powers, but in every case a constitutional arrangement tailored to fit the needs of the region instead of attempting to find some sort of non-existent over-all average.

Some of the problems can be met by an administrative arrangement; for example, the establishment of taxation arrangements designed to limit competition among provinces in key economic areas; the establishment of corporate income tax rates, a competition which only the strongest provinces can win. Administrative arrangements could also provide for the decentralization of government departments and agencies so as to give the west and the Maritimes a proportionate share of the benefits derived from governmental institutions.

Some of the answers to the problems I have mentioned can be found in government policy; for example, the creation of a national transportation policy worthy of the name, one that would have the effect of making transportation costs a neutral factor in finding the optimum location of an industry. This would mean that transportation costs would not dictate that an industry necessarily be located in an area of concentrated population.

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Some of the answers must come from westerners themselves. Since we lack political clout in Ottawa, we must come here, as provinces and Members of Parliament, better informed and prepared than our counterparts from the rest of the country. That means a great deal more attention to that kind of preparation for federal-provincial conferences on the part of provincial governments in the west than has been the case heretofore. Some of our problems are outside the realm of government and require action on the part of westerners. For example, western agricultural organizations must get together and form a common front. They can no longer afford the luxury of internal squabbles.

In the final analysis, the only real solution to the problems of the west which have given rise to its current sense of frustration and alienation is the establishment of a national government with the commitment and the courage to govern in the interest of the nation as a whole, even if that national interest makes it take stands on behalf of minorities in terms of electoral strength at the expense of majorities in terms of electoral strength. We need a government with the courage to say to the golden horseshoe region of Central Canada; "Re-examine your goals. It is obvious that further unrestricted growth in your area, in terms of population or industrial capacity for the production of wealth, is against your interest and the interest of the nation. Not only is unrestricted growth in your area defiling your environment and making it more difficult to live with decent standards, but it is contributing to disunity in this country and to the continuation of unacceptable levels of regional economic disparity."

This country can no longer afford the kind of government which the Liberal government has given us for the last four years—government by crisis management. Government without planning, government without goals always results in a policy of "Them what has gits" and of setting one region against another, one province against another and neighbour against neighbour. It is no acci-