

*The Address—Mr. Taylor*

I referred earlier to the poorly designed drought program, retroactive changes to the Western Grain Stabilization Program, and the removal of oats from the export jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. Most important right now is that ever-increasing rate of interest charged on farm and small business loans. The Government is abandoning farmers to the whims of the market-place and refusing to stand in the trenches and fight that financial battle with them.

What about those interest rates? What about the interest rates in the Throne Speech? I do not seem to be able to find much reference in the Throne Speech. I do not seem to be able to find anything that says this Government wants to control the rate of interest charged to the most important segments of our economy—farmers and small business people or anyone else for that matter.

The Government's Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is a strong supporter of the Bank of Canada and the present policy of letting interest rates rise to whatever level he wants. Western MPs, MLAs and Premiers have called for lower rates, and the Government is not listening. This Government had the opportunity in the Throne Speech to show the people of Canada that it cared about the ordinary Canadian farmer, the ordinary Canadian business persons, and the ordinary Canadian homeowner by telling them that they would intervene in the economy and control this spiral.

We know who wins with high interest rates. The winners are the wealthy with the money in the bank, the large corporations with the strong cash flows, real estate speculators, and of course the banks and financial institutions. They are the winners, not the ordinary Canadian. There is unlikely a single individual or business in The Battlefords—Meadowlake constituency, the area that I represent, who or which will benefit from these high interest rates. An easing in the bank rate must begin immediately, and it is only the Government that can force action like that.

My constituents are also concerned about energy policy, forestry policy, and the future of Regional Development Programs. Where in this Throne Speech are those matters dealt with, Madam Speaker? Where in this entire document setting out the Government's priorities for the coming year does this Government tell us that it is planning to meet the concerns of western Canadians?

We do not know about forestry, energy, agriculture, regional development, interest rates—any of those things. Where is this Government going? Really, I am very much concerned. These are the wheels that drive the western economy and they are all that is left, or they are all left out of this Government's priorities for the coming year. I could speak for a considerable length of time on what is missing from the Throne Speech, but let me mention just a couple more.

The first ones are the plans for aboriginal self-government and the plans for rural Canada being established by the Post Office. I have read this Throne Speech many times, and I could not tell my Indian constituents what this Government thinks it should do this year on meeting the terms of its previous commitment to Indian people.

In this House on Tuesday there were 14 young Indian people currently on a hunger strike because this Government has cut Indian educational programs. In my riding, as in others, federal and provincial subagreements have not been renewed. These agreements provided much needed financial assistance to the Indian and Métis communities. The Government's Throne Speech says that it will extend programs to assist native economic development, but we have had no signs. There is no idea of any real commitment to such a process.

Indian people in my riding, just as in ridings across the country, are asking this Government to let them become a part of our democratic process which recognized their right to their own future. The Government's current devolution strategy is wrong. It is wrong, not because it gives Indian people a greater and ever-increasing say in the administration of their own affairs, but because it does not provide the foundation, the structure or the resources needed to allow for adequate administration of their own affairs.

Indian issues will be important in this country this year. Therefore, I think it is important that this Government recognize it and state that it is its priority in this House of Commons and in the Throne Speech.

I have been talking again about what is not in the Throne Speech, but before I carry on and conclude there are two more points I want to make. There is just one paragraph after the Government's flimsy reference to Native Economic Development Programs in the Throne Speech. If this Government had spent any amount of time talking to the people about what it should do to turn this economy around, it would not have brought out a Throne Speech such as this one.