

*The Address—Mr. Kaplan*

an old law, the federal government cannot do anything if the boats sail at more than 3,000 feet from the bank.

Mr. Speaker, when that legislation was passed, boats were not going as fast as they are now, especially where the river is narrow. Moreover, the tonnage is not the same today as it was 10 or 20 years ago so that in the Lotbinière area, from Saint-Pierre-les-Becquets to Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly, the damages are tremendous. Petitions were signed in all municipalities without exception, resolutions were passed by all municipal councils calling for some financial aid from the federal government for repairing existing wharfs or retaining walls, in order to build new wharves if necessary after having amended that famous legislation. Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Richelieu (Mr. Côté) is aware of that problem since he has made some statements to that effect during the election campaign. I am convinced that all the members of the House whose constituency is situated on the shores of the St. Lawrence have the same problem as in the Lotbinière constituency.

I urge my colleague to set an example for our fellow citizens and stick together whatever is our political allegiance to convince the minister to review completely that part of the legislation and grant financial assistance either to the municipalities, to the riverside companies or the riparian residents themselves, in order to solve that extremely serious problem. The river is a source of wealth and river transportation is an opportunity for us to trade with other countries. The St. Lawrence River is the greatest inland sea in the world but it has become the nightmare of our fellow-citizens, for all those who live on its shores. Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to hear the comments of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) on the matter.

● (2100)

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate all those who have been elected to preside over our debates. I am confident that the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome) has been appointed to his high position with the unanimous consent of the House because of his personal qualities; I congratulate him and assure him of my support.

I also want to congratulate the hon. members for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel), Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner) and Louis-Hébert (Mrs. Morin) and I wish them the best of success in the tasks to which they were elected.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and to welcome in this House the hon. members for Montmorency (Mr. Duclos) and Vancouver East (Mr. Lee), two hon. members who have already demonstrated that they are formidable speakers.

[English]

York Centre constituency, Mr. Speaker, has sent me back to parliament after a two year absence, helping to create a strong Liberal majority.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Mr. Fortin.]

**Mr. Kaplan:** As I am on my feet for the first time in this session I want to thank all those who encouraged me to stay in politics, to run in York Centre, and who worked to win this seat for me and for my party. I am following here in the footsteps of Jimmy Walker who retired from this House after 12 years of devoted service to York Centre. I want to thank him for his years of hard work in his riding, work which I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, stood me in good stead when he committed his support to me. Jimmy Walker is a credit to this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kaplan:** York Centre voted Liberal because York Centre people expect that a Liberal government will serve them. I see it as my job for the next four years to make sure, in so far as I can, that it will.

In the Speech from the Throne the government has made a good start. The world is suffering from inflation and from recession, and although Canada is suffering less than other countries from both these problems, my constituents and I myself would identify them as the most serious problems we face in Canada today. The Speech from the Throne addressed both these problems.

I was relieved to see that the government specifically will not follow the traditional approach to fighting inflation, the traditional approach which includes raising taxes across the board, reducing the money supply and cutting back on government programs. I was afraid that the government would follow the lead of the United States where the conservative government of the former president, Mr. Nixon, a few years ago began cutting back government programs. It reduced government involvement by cutting back things like the Great Lakes cleanup and important social and health schemes. These policies, begun by President Nixon will, it seems, be continued by his successor, President Ford.

Here in Canada there are some taxes which should be increased and I am going to refer to them in a moment, and there are a few programs which should be cut back and I should like to refer to them too. By and large, however, York Centre people want good programs to be expanded, and in the Speech from the Throne we see that this will be done. There will be more help for housing; there will be subsidies and supports for farmers to keep the supply of food improving and increasing; there will be higher pensions, especially for veterans and retired civil servants and there will be—and I particularly welcome this—a new entitlement of spouses of senior citizens at the age of 60 to draw old age pensions.

● (2110)

The means test, as applied to entitlement for Canada Pension Plan payments, for those between the ages of 65 and 70 is to be removed. I hope, although the Speech from the Throne did not say this, that these measures will be made retroactive to the date of the last budget, and that all the pensions I referred to will be increased, effective as of that date. I say this because in the election campaign the Canadian people showed strongly that they wanted the increased benefits which were proposed by the government. So I hope that when these programs are introduced, they will be made retroactive.