

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

House last session of the Canada Water Act was borne by that department. There is an inherent conflict of interests, however, Mr. Speaker, between those who are seeking the exploitation of non-renewable resources and those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting the environment. This conflict is not irreconcilable, nor is there anything evil in it. Nevertheless, the government is of the opinion that these differences are better debated and resolved by ministers in council and not by officials within a single department. For that reason, certain responsibilities have been transferred from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as I mentioned a few moments ago.

● (2:40 p.m.)

The transfer will permit that department, which has been increasingly engaged in recent years in the formulation and administration of energy policies, to concentrate even more on this important work. Should additional strength and resources be required for it to meet the increasing challenge of this work, they will be provided as a matter of high priority. Our goal must be a national policy which will balance adequately our economic objectives and our environmental values.

I wish now to say something about the cities. Let me make crystal clear at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that the government is deeply conscious and aware of the constitutional responsibility and role of the provincial and municipal governments. Proposals of the federal government in the area of urban affairs should not be interpreted by the other levels of government as a desire or an intention to act other than within clearly defined federal jurisdiction.

Let me say as well that it is false to suggest that the federal government has not been active and welcome in the cities of this country for many years. More than 20 departments of the federal government are now present and engaged in the cities. And some of them are very active. In the field of low income housing, for example, 44 per cent of all the activity undertaken in Canada since 1950 has been achieved in the past two years.

The cities, Mr. Speaker, are as much a part of Canada, and as much a concern of the federal government, as is the countryside. The federal government is a partner with the provincial governments in this respect, and can in many instances perform in a catalytic role to assist in the attainment of agreed goals. The constitution gives to the provinces the responsibility for municipal government; it does not deny that city dwellers are as qualified to seek the assistance of the federal government in the solution of their problems as are rural dwellers.

This government has not been unaware of the need to offer more assistance to the cities, Mr. Speaker, as the housing statistics I mentioned a moment ago prove. Nor has it rushed into the cities like a bull into a china shop, as the opposition has urged us to do.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Trudeau: Do you want to say something about it?

An hon. Member: I have never heard anything like it. It's a lot of bull.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Mostly static.

Mr. Woolliams: You need a new scriptwriter.

Mr. Trudeau: No, I don't need a new scriptwriter, I need a better memory. I wish I could give the date when the Leader of the Opposition spoke so firmly of the need for this government to rush forth into the cities and do more. The next day he was disowned by the Premier of Ontario.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Didn't Ivan Head put that in the speech for you?

Mr. Trudeau: Of course, the NDP doesn't have this problem because they do not have to worry about getting elected.

An hon. Member: That's just whistling in the dark.

Mr. Trudeau: The reorganization of our urban activities is the result of detailed consultation and planning with other levels of government. They will be directed by a minister whom we propose to designate as a minister of state, who intends to participate in this debate.

Ministers of state are a new concept, Mr. Speaker, and are intended to permit government more effectively to deal with modern conditions. The proposed legislation regarding governmental organization will contain provision for the creation by order in council of offices of ministers of state for designated purposes; they will have a status and a salary equal to a minister with a department. These ministers of state generally will be responsible for developing new and comprehensive federal policies in areas where the development of such policies is of particular urgency and importance. The mandates of these ministers will be of a temporary nature, of such a duration as to enable them to come to grips with the policy problems assigned to them. They will not generally have departments, but only relatively small secretariats with no program responsibilities. The new system will give to the Prime Minister more flexibility in assigning senior ministers to tackle important problems that require policy development.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the legislation planned for this session flows naturally from the programs of the government in the past two years. Part of the legislation is an extension of our earnest belief in the need for rational, relevant criminal laws; part of it is a product of our affirmation of the need for a humane and sensitive, but stimulating and enterprising, social system, part of it is a desire for a burgeoning, well-distributed economy. All of it is a consequence of careful examination and preparation. Through the medium of white papers, we shall continue to reveal, to a degree unmatched by any previous Canadian government, our analysis of problems and our proposed solutions. We shall continue to offer legislation based upon those white papers. We shall do so in the belief that the people of Canada desire to participate in the preparation of sound policies; we shall do so undeterred by a Don Quixote racing across the land