

be effective. Indeed, they have had the reverse effect of increasing inflationary pressures by creating shortages.

The British economy is threatened with nothing less than disaster—largely as a result of widespread labour strikes in opposition to wage controls—because of lack of support necessary to make those controls successful.

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** What does that prove?

**Hon. Mr. Perrault:** Again, it should be said that those who aspire to replace the government, those who advocate controls, should tell Canadians just how differently those controls would be imposed from the way controls are imposed in other countries.

Three years ago, on January 31, 1971, a well-known Canadian political figure made a speech on the subject of controls. His words should be borne in mind. He said:

Controls would cause untold resentment among groups and individuals who felt unfairly done by, and they would result in a climate of constant confrontation. In addition, of course, they would inevitably lead to a highly centralized and therefore inefficient form of economic planning.

The well-known political figure who made that speech is today's Leader of the official Opposition in the other place. He appears to have undergone a conversion second in dramatic impact only to that of Paul's conversion while on the road to Damascus.

● (1520)

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** Do you mean Paul Martin?

**Hon. Mr. Perrault:** Federal government policies have stimulated, in recent months and years, a record amount of housing construction, as well as providing assistance for more home ownership. The federal fund of half a billion dollars for land assembly and the establishment of the Federal Residential Mortgage Agency will also make it easier for more people to purchase homes. Just last month, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported a record number of housing starts across Canada for the third consecutive year. There were 265,000 housing starts in 1973, an increase of 6 per cent over 1972. If housing construction continues at its present record level, it will help reduce housing prices, which is of importance to all Canadians. As the Minister of State for Urban Affairs said the other day, "Construction and production have exceeded for quite some years the rate of family formation in this country. Obviously, if we can maintain this kind of construction, which I think we can, it will have a depressing effect on prices."

The government is spending \$100 million in each of the next five years on a land assembly program to increase the supply of serviced land to meet housing needs, and to control land prices. Money is now available for the purchase of both new and old houses for low income housing. This program has conferred benefits all across the country, but more improvements are needed, as is clearly admitted.

There will be substantial assistance to rural and native housing programs. This is one of the important statements in the Speech from the Throne. Also, the sewage assistance program will be revised to make it more effective as a means of increasing the supply of serviced land, and the

government will introduce measures to increase the protection available to consumers in the housing market.

At this juncture I should like to say something about alleged Western alienation. I am a Westerner. I was born in Western Canada. Indeed, my mother was born in Manitoba, raised in Saskatchewan, married in Calgary, and I was born in British Columbia, so I think I have a right to say something about the West. I am a Westerner, and over the years I have identified myself with the aspirations of those who live in Western Canada.

In my view, certain legitimate grievances exist in Western Canada, and I have stated them on many occasions, as have other members of this chamber. I have attended many meetings and conferences relating to Western problems and grievances. I welcome that section of the Throne Speech which makes reference to the implementation of certain proposals set out during the Western Economic Opportunities Conference. I welcome the announcement that a number of measures will be taken, in the larger context, to ensure that Canada's transportation capabilities support the government's national goals and are safe and efficient. Together with other Westerners, I welcome the announcement that steps will be taken to end discrimination in freight rates and that a new ports policy will be developed to ensure an effective and comprehensive ports structure in Canada, in a framework where a high degree of local involvement and management can be established. This kind of action is welcome. It is overdue.

I suspect, however, that despite these government initiatives, despite these efforts on the part of the federal government to remove the source of many Western grievances, the political critics will be as strident as ever. The fact is that no government in history has been more responsive to the needs and aspirations of Western Canada than the present government. That is a fact which cannot be distorted by Opposition efforts to say otherwise. Despite the ranting and railing of the Opposition critics, it is a fact that infinitely more has been done for Western Canada by the present government than was done by preceding governments.

There is still a great deal left to be done. No Westerner would ever admit that perfection has been achieved, despite the fact that Western Canada now enjoys its highest level of economic prosperity in history. Similarly, I would not expect my friends from the Maritimes, Ontario, Quebec, or any other province, to admit that they had achieved perfection. I do suggest, however, that politically motivated criticism of the federal government for its alleged discrimination against Western Canada discredits the entire Western position and does a great deal of damage.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Western Economic Opportunities Conference in Calgary, which was an unique event in the history of Canada. It was the first time since Confederation that a Government of Canada brought most of its Cabinet ministers out to a sit-down conference, televised to all of the people in Western Canada, to discuss Western problems, hopes and aspirations, dreams and difficulties. It was never done by a Conservative administration. I well recall a Tory "Roads to Resources" program which resulted in British Columbia