

What Canada needs and what Canadians want is a Canadian-owned company with a clear direction and able to compete with the multinationals, a company with the financial structure to stand on its own feet, a company not politically oriented, not an empire of bureaucrats but a company of Canadians in every sense of the word.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brisco: I do not subscribe, nor does my government, to the socialist philosophy that only a small elite, either here in Ottawa or out west in Calgary, can run anything and everything. So I say: Let us get on with the task of energy self-sufficiency and, at the same time, destroy the myth created by the opposition that we would hand PetroCan over to the multinationals. I know there is concern across Canada about the destiny of PetroCan and I can understand that concern, particularly in light of the stories of the Liberals and the NDP. Canadians are opposed to having PetroCan turned over to the multinationals, and I do not blame them at all. So are we, and that is the point that the people opposite fail to recognize.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brisco: I wonder just where the opposition believes we should be going with PetroCan now. Do they feel we should leave it as it is?

An hon. Member: Expand it.

An hon. Member: Put money in it.

Mr. Brisco: We hear all kinds of hoots and cries from the brainless ones, sir. But if that is the case, are we going to have any kind of guarantee that they will be responsible to Parliament? The outfit across the way would not want it responsible to Parliament. They never had it that way and they surely would not want to begin now.

Forty-four years ago, which is nearly half a century ago, Kootenay West was represented for the last time by a member of the government. That is a long time in the doldrums. In that interval, three members have represented Kootenay West until my election in 1974, and all three of them, regardless of their political philosophy, have served that constituency to the best of their ability. There was Billy Esling who served from 1925 to 1945, a man who resigned in 1945 because he became virtually blind. He was succeeded by Bert Herridge, a fine gentleman. I am sure there are many members in the House who have been here for a long time, particularly the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who remember him. We called him the squire of the Kootenays. He was succeeded by Ran Harding who came to the House after 23 years of representing his constituency in the provincial House. Each of them in his own way worked with diligence on behalf of the constituency.

I do not think anyone would deny that, in some respects at least, it is harder to represent a constituency when you are on the government side. Certainly I think we would all recognize that in opposition there are those frustrations which rest on the

The Address—Mr. Brisco

failure to fulfil everything you would like to fulfil in your constituencies that might possibly be accomplished in government. I have some reservations today whether many of the aspirations of members on the government side, let alone the opposition, will be fulfilled in terms of hon. members' own constituencies until we are able to shed ourselves of the financial chaos and disaster, the reign of fiscal terror perpetrated on Canadians by 11 years particularly, and 16 years generally, of Liberal policy.

● (1650)

I note that in the throne speech reference is made to a freedom of information act. I only suggest that the government consider implementing that measure before considering a national uranium inquiry. If the experience in many provinces, Saskatchewan, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, is any example, it is important that we have a freedom of information act in place before we start asking questions in terms of a uranium or nuclear energy inquiry.

I note, sir, that there is provision for improvements in spouses' allowances. Certainly members on this side, and my colleague on the other side, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, recognize the time spent both in this House and in the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Human Resources trying to persuade the government of that day to remove the inequities in spouses' allowances.

I am also pleased to see in the throne speech a recognition of the concerns and problems of Canada's veterans. It is, indeed, unfortunate that in the last government we had an apologist for a minister, a man without clout in government in terms of representation of our veterans. Again there are those in this House who should be mentioned particularly as having fought for the welfare of Canada's veterans. I think of Jack Marshall, who has gone to the other place, Bill Knowles, who is no longer a member, having retired after many years of service, our own member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie), our present Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. McKinnon), and, yes again, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

I note also in the throne speech a concern about FIRA, the Foreign Investment Review Agency. I share that concern, a concern which certainly existed when we were in the opposition, and nothing has happened since to relieve that concern. In fact, I suppose my concerns have been reinforced.

I can remember when Salmo Forest Products Ltd., an American company sold to an American company operating in Canada, had an application before FIRA. The application was rejected because the proposition was not going to provide any significant benefit to Canada, particularly in terms of new employees. What did that company do? It laid off 50 employees on the excuse that some kind of legislation in the United States obliged it as a small company—and I question that—to follow certain rules which provided that they could not have more than 500 employees, or something like that, on their total payroll and still be involved in the forest industry cutting logs from a national forest in the state of Idaho. That