

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, January 24, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, December 14, 1983, consideration of the motion of Mr. Jack Burghardt for an address to his Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Mulroney (p. 45).

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have an opportunity to say a few words on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I express congratulations to the mover and to the seconder on their speeches in this debate.

Also I want to express my compliments to you, Mr. Speaker, on being chosen the Speaker of the House of Commons. You have been a distinguished Member of the House for many years. The recent expression we hear when we talk about astronauts being made of the right stuff certainly applies to you. Certainly during your tenure as Deputy Speaker you proved that in fact you had the right stuff to take on that important and difficult role in which you distinguished yourself. We wish you well, and I know that you have equipped yourself well for your important role in this difficult year of the rest of this Parliament.

In speaking to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I believe the Government has set out an excellent range of priorities and plans for the Second Session of this Thirty-second Parliament. It is easy to say that there is not enough detail in it; of course, a Speech from the Throne is never designed to give complete detail. That will come as individual Bills are introduced in the House during this session, as well as the Budget which I understand will be announced later this week.

The two priorities of global peace and security and national prosperity are the twin themes on people's minds today. Clearly the concern for economic recovery, the opportunity for jobs and an improved economic situation have to be the top priorities of any politician. At the same time we recognize that as a significant middle-range power in the world Canada has an important international position of responsibility.

● (1110)

Having been in office for the last 15 years, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) had an international position of seniority and I think most Canadians are pleased and happy that

he has taken on the role of trying to make a really meaningful contribution to international peace and security.

Last September the Prime Minister visited my constituency of Algoma and the neighbouring constituency of Sault Ste. Marie. At that time he had the opportunity of meeting with the parents of one of the passengers on the KAL-W07 flight involved in the Korean airline disaster, Mr. and Mrs. Hendrie. It was a very difficult time for that family and I am sure it will be in the months and years ahead.

While speaking to 500 to 600 people I realized how much concern there was for the international scene, the growing hostility of the superpowers in the East and West. As the Prime Minister spoke to the gathering about peace. Although we were furious, disturbed, discouraged and concerned with the Russian action in shooting down the airliner, it was obvious that in the end we had to communicate with them in order to find a way to cool down the cold war rhetoric and the ongoing difficulties that exist between the East and the West bloc.

I think it is important that the Prime Minister, because of his position on the international scene, has gained a lot of support for his peace mission, not only from the 45 countries attending the Commonwealth of Nations meeting in New Delhi, India, but from the western European nations, the Chinese, the President of the United States and the Pope, as well as from the countries of western Europe and here at home.

Late in December a poll was conducted by the *Toronto Star* which indicated that four out of five Canadians polled at that time support the Prime Minister's peace initiative and urge him to continue with it. In the face of the tremendous cynicism there is among the press toward any Canadian taking on any international function or activity, that is encouraging and indicates that the Canadian people do not share that cynicism.

No one underestimates the enormity of the task or the chances of success. It is a very difficult one. It is easy to gain support for a mission of this nature from western democracies and the Third World countries in the Commonwealth of Nations. The real difficulty in western and eastern bloc countries and in Russia is that they do not have the same open society that we have and the same freedom of the press.

As the Prime Minister leaves tonight for a visit to the eastern bloc countries of Europe, I am sure all Members of the House wish him well in this momentous and important undertaking.

I want to comment now on a number of items in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, relating to the economy because these things are important in my constituency. I am