

*The Address*

Even if we were to take all of the cost of running the government, fire every member of Parliament, let every civil servant go and shut down the entire government we would still not be able to balance the overspending by the government.

• (1550)

With respect to the members of the BQ, when the party is talking about protecting social programs, I suggest that they also give consideration to how they are going to protect the social programs unless they are going to be prepared to selectively make sure that people who have the most needs are protected.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, a former member once told me that I would probably be making my maiden speech to an almost empty House. I did not believe him. This must be what it feels like to address an NDP election rally.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to begin by congratulating you on your appointment. I would also like to congratulate all hon. members for their election to this House. It is my earnest hope that in spite of the philosophical gulf that separates some of us that we will be able to sit down and reason together to address the problems, the almost overwhelming problems, that are facing us.

I want to sincerely thank the people who sent me here, the electors of Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia. I made only two election promises to them: to faithfully represent them and their views in this place; and to work with every means at my disposal toward the restoration of fiscal sanity in this country.

Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia is a western rural constituency. The majority of my constituents are people who take their living from the land: farmers, ranchers, coal miners and people who work in the oil patch, the sort of people who political, cultural and media elitists sometimes dismiss as rednecks. I have been called a redneck myself and it is a label I wear with considerable pride.

What is a redneck? A redneck is someone who does not belong to all the right clubs and who does not subscribe to trendy social and political doctrines. We rednecks strongly believe in the concept of public service, that governments, civil servants, politicians and political parties exist to serve the people and not the other way around. We believe that individual rights are sacred, that they supersede group rights, and moreover that you cannot protect and enhance the rights of some groups at the expense of other groups. Rights are indivisible.

We believe in the virtues of hard work and personal enterprise. We strongly believe that the producers of real wealth are entitled to keep a reasonable share of the fruits of their labours,

that their standard of living should not be lower than that enjoyed by the multitudes of non-producers who the taxman requires them to carry on their backs.

Taxation in this country is so high that working people are beginning to have difficulty differentiating between taxmen and highwaymen.

We believe in the spirit of community service. It made our communities liveable long before the tentacles of central government began to strangle us a couple of generations ago. Neighbours helping neighbours.

We tend to speak the Queen's English without embellishment. Among my friends and neighbours even in this day and age it is not at all uncommon to hear such phrases as: "It's a deal," or: "That is none of your business".

I have staked out my philosophical position. I believe that it fairly represents the views of the people who sent me here. However, there are a few people, a very few, in Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia who are as politically correct as any hon. member might wish and I shall never forget that it is my duty to represent them, too.

The future of our country appears more bleak now than at any time since the second world war. The former government has left us a legacy of debt, deficit and national disunity for which the Progressive Conservative Party has been consigned to well-deserved oblivion. However, we must never forget nor allow the government to forget that seeds of these problems were sown by Liberal governments in the 1970s. The PCs watered and fertilized these weeds but they did not plant them.

• (1555)

Therefore when I realized that we face 177 Liberal members my heart sunk a little but then I remembered that more than half of them are like me. They are new to this place and they bear no responsibility for the disastrous Trudeau years. I optimistically hope and expect that many of them will have fresh new ideas. They did not write the speech from the throne which is remarkably short on new ideas and contains no serious initiatives to control the deficit. Perhaps that shortcoming will be rectified when the government presents its first budget.

If the government does make a serious effort to kill the deficit monster, I pray that the weapon of choice will be a knife to cut costs and not a gun to extract more taxes from the people.

In Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia with our farm economy flat on its back we are very dependent on fuel production for our economic survival. We have several small oil fields, some natural gas and one of the biggest coal mines in the country.