

*The Address—Mr. Nelson*

governments, but without the full and cordial support of both provincial and federal governments they are often, in the words of a well known television hillbilly character, "tossing their hooks into a dry creek bed".

The lower mainland region is rated by those who profess to know such things as the third or fourth most beautiful spot in the world in terms of city, setting and climate. On a clear day one can see the majesty of the mountains which form the ramparts of this strikingly attractive setting. Yet it requires very little vision to foresee the day, perhaps within a decade, when the very mountains and the delta lowlands will, like the Los Angeles area, become the repository of a thick, poisonous and choking smog which will lie like a pall over the highly-populated lower mainland region.

The problem of urban growth and its attendant implications of pollution of the environment is one that should transcend partisan politics. It is a problem that must be the concern of every thinking citizen, for it must be obvious to all who are familiar with the region that time is running out, just as it is running out in other major population centres in Canada.

In 1971, the Science Council of Canada in its report pointed out that cities have only two sources of income, the municipal property tax which is resented by many low income and elderly people, and grants from provincial governments—grants which often have strings attached which prevent innovational development.

Even if the money were available, it is virtually impossible to co-ordinate attempts at co-operative development among cities, towns and villages, some of which have a strong tax base and others of which have virtually none. This government has a unique opportunity to provide the kind of leadership envisioned by the Science Council of Canada when it meets with the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba at the conference mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

So far, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken broadly of the long-term problem of urban development because of the susceptibility of Burnaby-Seymour to urban sprawl. The residents of Burnaby, and particularly those of North Vancouver, moved to these areas precisely to avoid the congestion of urban life. I believe they are realistic enough to recognize that expansion of the region is inevitable and in many cases desirable so long as it is a planned development, but I am bound to mar the sweet reasonableness of my speech at this point to say that this government has until now shown very little evidence and inclination or an ability to plan, for if one thinks of an economy as a man-made thing rather than as a natural phenomena, then surely it is possible to plan programs that will overcome the abuses of which the government has freely admitted its guilt.

The people of my riding will watch with interest any increase in the port facilities west of the Second Narrows bridge, for it is of great concern to us all that much of our shipping is being diverted to Seattle or Portland. At the same time, many of our residents would frown on unsightly industrial development of the foreshore extending east of the Second Narrows bridge, preferring to develop the natural beauty of the region into parks and carefully planned residential areas. I mention the inadequacy of

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our port facilities only in passing, because I am certain that this topic will be pursued at greater length by the member for Vancouver East (Mr. Neale) and others.

I should like, before my time runs out, to mention the topic on which I have received the greatest number of representations from my constituents. By far the greatest concern has been expressed over the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. That concern was reflected, you will recall, during the first question period in this House. It seems most strange and wonderful to me that during the election campaign the central issue regarding unemployment insurance was the inconvenience imposed on the subscribers by the unwieldy administration of the plan. I see no change in this emphasis from the individual complaints that I receive or from the group representations. Yet almost overnight it seems that the emphasis has been shifted to the cost of the plan, and additional delays have been imposed through the establishment of section 107 of the act which provides for interrogation by what are euphemistically called "benefit control officers" whose skilled questioning may unwittingly jeopardize the claims of the unskilled applicant.

One would hope that the reference to clarifying certain aspects of the unemployment insurance plan made in the Speech from the Throne would refer to steps designed to simplify and expedite its administration. It seems a fundamental law of human nature that the more safeguards one institutes to prevent abuses, the more methods will the minority of freeloaders find to circumvent those safeguards. Skilled interviewers, not interrogators, abolition of the waiting period and lengthening of the eligibility period could probably speed up payments and lessen administration costs. So far as the much publicized cost of the plan is concerned, critics often neglect to mention that a large portion of that cost is retrieved through the payment of taxes in any case. In this connection I compliment the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) for his humanitarian approach to the plan in his speech this afternoon.

• (2140)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nelson:** We are all concerned with the problem of retirement, both in the area of the Old Age Security Act and of the private pension plans of companies like the CNR and CPR, and I have no doubt that the government will be hearing more from our side of the House on the inequities that exist in the administration and funding of private pension schemes. Whatever influence I can bring to bear on the improvement of pensions will be based on a deep-seated conviction that any person, man or woman, who has served society for a stated number of years deserves to live out the remainder of his or her life in reasonable comfort, with special consideration for the disabled, the blind, the retarded and, indeed anyone who suffers any handicap for which he requires special attention.

Legislators are prone to attach a number to the age at which a person is allowed to retire, the present number generally being thought of as age 65. Many people begin work at the age of 18, which means that they must work for 47 years before enjoying the fruits of retirement. Little