

My second excerpt reads—and it refers to western members “You also have an extra responsibility in the present circumstances to represent the nation to your constituents”.

This last quote is taken from part V of the Speech from the Throne entitled “An Active Foreign Policy”. Why is that? One infers that when the government says nation in this context it really means the national government, and is calling upon western members of Parliament to convey its message to our constituents. But it has done nothing since February 18 on interest rates, the Prince Rupert port development, metrification, twinning both the CNR and western members of Parliament, and the Olympic games, all of which has not demonstrated anything other than Mr. Trudeau’s fondness for kicking the west in the teeth.

On the very important energy question, the throne speech speaks of security of energy supply while making hostile gestures at everyone in the oil industry, PetroCan excepted, which now employs directly about one in three Albertans. Domestic security and self-sufficiency in energy have been harmed by virtually everything the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) has said or done since his appointment. I include in that, of course, his expressed joy here, the other day that Canadians will pay more than world prices for Mexican oil but no longer will pay world prices for synthetic oil from Fort McMurray.

Does he think that such a policy will encourage the proposed Alsands and Cold Lake plants to proceed? Does he think his policy will help Canada’s balance of payments or Canadian jobs in both eastern and western Canada? The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. At the back of western minds, and coming to the forefront, is the conviction that there is no one effective to speak for the west within the cabinet. The people of the west are convinced that the only power lies in central Canada, supported by a government that won its majority—albeit narrowly—in central Canada by campaigning on the backs of western Canadians.

A great many westerners were shocked by the election results and, in my opinion, are becoming increasingly bitter as those results are beginning to bear bitter fruit. They see the federal government once again turning its guns, not its ear, to the west. This is not new. Under successive Liberal governments the western promise has been thwarted, time and time again, by policies that either neglected or exploited the west. The attitude of those opposite has always been regarded as a flaunting of power. During 11 years of government under the present leader, westerners have felt that a highly centralized national policy was promoted which left little room for diversity, and resulted in disparity of social and economic benefits. In my opinion, the inequality of sacrifice, and the policy of inequality, westerners feel have contributed to the unhappiness of French Canadians, maritimers and westerners.

● (1720)

Why is it that the Liberals were unable to command enough support to elect a single member between the Red River valley and the Pacific, the 49th parallel and the Arctic? Westerners

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voted, quite simply, for their survival. They voted against the Liberal party which is identified with policies favouring only two provinces in this dominion.

Perhaps anyone who is not a westerner can really understand the kind of helpless anger we have felt as we have tried and failed to get a hearing for our unique regional perspective. Perhaps no one has really tried to understand. Perhaps our problems and concerns that seem particularly important do not even seem interesting to the rest of Canada. This seems to be the case. There appears to be a general public ignorance regarding the west’s situation. We had better begin educating ourselves immediately.

Since the implementation of Sir John A. Macdonald’s national policy in the 1870s, the west has been viewed as a source of raw materials and markets for central Canada. For generations westerners watched wealth move from west to east. The west was not even able to get control of its resources until we seized them from the Mackenzie King government in the 1930s.

The 1947 oil boom, caused by the finding of oil at Leduc, ignited a boom in one province in western Canada. In 1972 the OPEC countries began to increase the price of oil. Those of us in Alberta thought that after 100 years wealth would start to flow in our direction, but central Canada thought otherwise. The Trudeau government slapped an export tax on crude oil in order to subsidize eastern industry which was buying expensive overseas oil. Albertans were furious. I cannot stress too strongly that that fury has not diminished since February 18. Export taxes have never been levied on Ontario manufactured goods, gold production, electricity or anything, in order to subsidize westerners. And so, as every member here knows, the familiar issue of natural resources control, and oil pricing, began.

When we talk about dissatisfaction, it is more than just that issue. It is freight rates, industry, agriculture, banking, and culture. Take one example, the hog industry. I think this is symbolic. Ontario and Quebec import feed grains from the prairies on heavily subsidized freight rates, then create a feeding and packing house industry, pushing the prairie feed into locally raised animals and transferring the lucrative end of the business away from the prairie provinces. In part, because of federal feed freight assistance, figures show that it is cheaper to ship 880 pounds of barley off the prairies than 160 pounds of frozen pork. This is incredible to me. This enables feed-deficient provinces to raise hogs and slaughter them at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer in general and of the western hog industry in particular. This is certainly not the case where market forces set the pattern of production. For example, the state of Iowa, with less than 2 per cent of the American population, grows and slaughters more hogs than any other state simply because it has the best corn supply.

Take grain transportation. Wheat Board officials admit they are losing about \$2 million per day in potential wheat sales because they cannot deliver the goods. Canada, once the breadbasket of the world, has slipped to fifth or sixth place as a wheat exporter. The main reason that Canada has lost command of the world wheat trade is that our system of grain