

Alberta and are bringing it unparalleled success in industrial growth.

● (1600)

The value of building permits in any urban area in a particular year is an indicator of the expansion of the area. In 1971, in Medicine Hat building permits were let in the amount of \$889,000. Shortly after that, DREE began to give major assistance. In 1973, that \$889,000 total soared to \$21 million. The projected amount for next year in Medicine Hat, Alberta, is \$150 million.

Coming from an urban area such as metropolitan Toronto, with the environmental problems and urban sprawl problems which we have, I would almost be frightened by such rapid expansion. Never let it be said the government is not attempting to assist in giving very real assistance to all parts of Canada, including the west. No one can claim that either the great resource-maker in the sky or the federal government forgot Medicine Hat. Similar extensive federal aid went to south Lethbridge and Slave Lake in Alberta.

Some hon. members might resent an easterner attempting to discuss the west, but I am concerned as one of those so-called wicked, greedy easterners. I spent some time in Alberta during the recent recess; in fact, in the general area of the hon. member opposite. My purpose was twofold. It was, first, to try to learn of their anger and frustrations. I think we all, as parliamentarians from all sides of the House and all parties, are deeply concerned about any situation that is divisive of our national unity. I was also there to better understand their problems and to express, as too seldom reaches western ears, some eastern problems—if you can convince westerners that we have problems—and some of the great advantages and potentials of their part of Canada as we in the east see and enjoy them.

I noted in Tuesday's *Globe and Mail* a quotation of the words of the Premier of Alberta with regard to the cushioning of rising oil prices in eastern Canada, the government's pledge to do that and to attempt to discuss it with the province. The Premier of Alberta said, "Well, that's Ottawa's problem." I wonder if back in 1961, when the national energy policy was established by the government of Canada, what might have been different if in fact Ottawa had said, "Development of your resources is your problem. Go to it." The federal government imposed regulations forcing Canadians west of the Ottawa Valley to pay more for western Canadian oil than offshore oil—that is, from the Ottawa Valley westward—even though in Edmonton, a few miles from the oil fields, it was more expensive than buying offshore oil.

Eastern problems or western problems, they are Canada's problems and not just Ottawa's problems if equality of opportunity, education or economic well-being are involved. They are not Ottawa's problems translated into a particular government or particular party. It is Canada that has to cope with them. This country cannot survive if the federal government alone must bear the burden and solve the discrepancies in lifestyle across Canada. East, west, central or north, the responsibility belongs to us all as long as any one of us says, "I am a Canadian."

*The Address—Mr. Fleming*

There has been cause for western anger and frustration. I understand it better, having spent some time talking about it in the west with westerners. So did the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues because of the western economic opportunities conference. The anger and frustration in the west has built up over many years. You can see it very clearly, not so much when you talk to their leaders, who are very strident in what they tell us is wrong, but when you talk directly to westerners in their own homes. That same anger and frustration, amassed for so long, is now being nurtured by an opposition apparently blind to real progress or unwilling to recognize it because of opportunistic, political motives.

I think we succeeded in showing the rest of Canada the problem and showing the west there is interest here in Ottawa. Surely, if that was done on a raw political base it was a foolish move. If it was done to find solutions it was a good move, despite some political disadvantage to it. For the Prime Minister and the cabinet to go west and face the western press, which has hardly been our best friend over the years, and face at public meetings the leaders of those provinces was a daring, forward and honest move. It was done publicly, openly and on their own ground. There is no cheaper or easier shot these days in the west than to take on the federal Liberals, but is there a time when political stridency hurts more than it helps you politically in a particular party? Is there ever a time when it will hurt anyone else more than those seeking the regress of their long-standing grievances?

It was pointed out at the western economic opportunities conference that freight rates are a major problem in the west. At that conference the Premier of Alberta presented the federal government with 20 complaints of alleged tariff inequities. Over the following months that figure grew to almost 200. Day by day we hear the strident scream that nothing is being done. That conference was held last July. We are intensively investigating 200 different tariffs. If you want answers and some equity in the west because you have been treated poorly, surely you want responsible, proper answers so that the tariffs will be corrected forever in the future. Give the government a chance to look at it properly to analyse what the solution should be.

Estimates of revenues amassed by the 1961 national oil policy, as carried out through the years until a few months ago to help develop western resources, have ranged as high as \$500 million. I am willing to admit that one of the problems was that all the money from most of Ontario and points westward went into developing the resources for not only Alberta but for all of Canada. We see the wisdom of that now and are further acting to see that the entire country can be supplied from western resources. The fact is that perhaps there was too much development of the refineries in the east. That situation should be corrected.

Obviously, the west has had real reason to say they have been disadvantaged in developing secondary industry, but judging from the actions of the last day or two by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) the pledges and commitments that were publicly made will be met by the government. This situation is in the process of being corrected; there is no doubt about that. Errors and mistakes have been made on both sides over