

*The Address—Mr. Howie*

des intangibles, des sacrées  
vérités de toujours!  
Je t'aime, ô mon pays!  
Et, à toi, mon frère,  
de quelque race ou langue que tu sois,  
de nouveau, je dirai:  
Viens avec moi! Regarde!  
Cela nous fut donné,  
l'incomparable et libre terre,  
et l'avenir matinal et beau,  
semblable à un héros de force  
portant d'une main  
l'aurore,  
et de l'autre,  
la nuit,  
et chantant l'hymne viril:  
Heureux sous le regard de Dieu  
et le signe de l'immuable Polaire,  
Heureux entre leurs trois océans,  
les peuples comme le nôtre  
épaulés sur le Nord!  
Heureux les peuples accordés!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

● (2010)

[English]

**Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker. shortly before the last election a well-known Liberal in my constituency published a book entitled: "How To Get Elected". He attributed it to a mythical Senator Plumtree as told to Arthur T. Doyle. It was intended to be a parody on political life. In it the non-hero stays perpetually in office by avoiding real issues and telling the majority of his constituents what they want to hear and what they wish were true. According to Senator Plumtree, who reminds me of the American cartoon character Senator Snort, the politician has no higher responsibility than to win and keep office. Little did the author know that the book would be adopted literally by his party as a national campaign guide. Of course, we really do not expect a humorist to point out all the possible dangers of a philosophy or program which he proposes in jest. But in the real world we cannot escape the consequences of political cynicism and irresponsibility, especially when this behaviour is rewarded at the polls.

I know that 20 minutes are not nearly long enough for a member to describe every blow dealt to the health and progress of this country by the last Liberal campaign. For that reason I will speak mostly of the impact on the province and the region which I represent. But, before turning to those concerns, I have one comment to make about the national implications of the last campaign. I refer to the Liberal party attitude toward Alberta.

Not since 1917 has a major political party set out so deliberately to vilify one section of the population solely to curry favour with the rest. There was no genuine policy issue involved in this attack on western producing provinces, particularly Alberta. The Liberals detailed no energy policy. It was a calculated attempt to offer maritime and Ontario voters a scapegoat for their fear and insecurity about energy, to legitimize what the pollsters told them was growing resentment of western prosperity. The Liberal candidate in my

constituency came right out with a newspaper advertisement proclaiming that the 18-cent federal excise tax increase would go into the Alberta heritage fund. I grant you the appeal was frequently more subtle elsewhere, but the intention remained unmistakable. There was no acknowledgement that the west's resources are finite and that experience has taught westerners not to expect any help from federal Liberal policy in establishing the basis for permanent prosperity.

There is no mystery why western provinces feel obliged to guarantee their own future. Instead, we hear about greedy Albertans ready to let easterners freeze in the dark and about the un-Canadian attitude of the blue-eyed sheiks. Of course the end result is to reinforce the westerners' lack of faith in the fairness of federal policy and their suspicion of the term "national interest." The crowning indignity is all this pious talk about proportionate representation as if constituency democracy, not Liberal cynicism, is to be blamed for the lack of elected western representatives in the cabinet. This is an insult to the intelligence of westerners, and so I might add is the false analogy with the problem of representation in Quebec.

The west has specific current reasons for rejecting the Liberal party. Despite that rejection, the political system remains competitive. Canada's real political problem is that parties which represent Canada's most dynamic regions never have a genuine opportunity to govern. A party which won an absolute majority of seats in four of the country's five regions last May was given barely enough time for housekeeping legislation. A party virtually shut out in two regions now governs with a secure majority. I am surprised that the philosopher king of federalism will not admit that this is the real political time bomb in Canada.

The maritime provinces, too, have historic grievances and problems. The promise of confederation for this region was a sharing of economic opportunities and benefits with central Canada. During the first 60 years, natural economic forces, internal weaknesses, and insensitive federal policies, especially in the field of transportation, destroyed the potential for balanced trade between the two regions. The maritimes became a captive market for tariff protected central Canadian manufacturers, and paid for them by selling natural products to traditional foreign customers.

● (2020)

For decades the lack of economical opportunity at home forced hundreds of thousands of maritimers to leave the region. These included some of the most ambitious and best educated people. Maritimers need no lessons from French Canadian history to understand social decapitation.

Beginning in the Second World War the federal government developed a variety of expedients to mitigate the worst effects of this situation; direct social benefits, equalization payments to provincial governments, aid to traditional primary sectors, the military presence which have all raised incomes and the standard of social services. DREE's support for infrastructure and its industrial incentives have created employment,