

*The Address—Mr. Whittaker*

spending more and more money on the exploration of fossil fuels and on distribution systems such as pipelines, tankers or whatever is used to transport fossil fuels. More and more exploration is taking place in remote and delicate parts of Canada, such as the north, the Beaufort Sea and Baffin Island. What we are really doing is buying time. Much energy is being used in the world, especially in the United States and in highly industrialized parts of this country. Petroleum is a depleting form of energy and it is running out. We are spending more and more money in the delicate areas of our country in order to find an energy resource which will be depleted in any event, and the more we do this, the more there is need to worry about the environment.

I do not think enough emphasis is being put on the importance of alternative forms of energy. There is not enough research carried out; not nearly as much money is being spent on research as there is on the search for more fossil fuels. Other sources of energy are solar, nuclear and electricity. It is becoming more and more evident that, especially in Canada and the United States, we will have to rely on these other sources of energy. We must put more and more of our money and resources into research, so that we will be ready when fossil fuels are depleted, and so we can use fossil fuels for a longer period than is now predicted. Granted, a person of my age may never see the end of fossil fuels, but we must start planning for our children, our grandchildren and their children. Much more emphasis will have to be placed on this area.

In the Speech from the Throne very little was said about agriculture. There was a passing reference to the effect that something is going to be done about a food strategy. I know that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has said he is going to reorganize and restructure his department, but in my opinion that is just window-dressing. That is the type of thing that is done when the government is in trouble and really has no answers or solutions. It has been done many times, not only in government but also in industry. It does not really solve anything.

Just before I came to Ottawa as a member of parliament, there was a period when the federal government had a task force on agriculture, called the agricultural congress. It was reputed to be the answer to the problems of Canadian agriculture in the 1970s. The federal government spent a lot of money on it. It employed all the best agricultural people and people from consumer groups to discuss the great task of doing something for agriculture in the 1970s. The government set up a trends in food prices committee. That was replaced by the Food Prices Review Board.

These initiatives really have not accomplished anything different from what was accomplished after the first congress. The solutions which were put forward by the agricultural congress have never really been used. If this government wants to save money, I suggest it should dust off the old books, read them and start following some of their recommendations, instead of just starting other programs with different names and trying to convince farmers and consumers that the government is really doing something about agriculture. The problem

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with agriculture in Canada is that there is no agricultural policy; the federal government has never really spelled out guidelines for an agriculture policy.

Farmers in the United States have many difficulties. They are getting to the point where they are ready to become militant. One of the reasons for this is that the reduction of inflation in the last year or two has really been brought about on the backs of farmers. This has been because of cheaper food. However, that will not keep the farmer of Canada or the United States in business. If and when they go out of business, the chickens will come home to roost and the trouble will really begin. It has already started in the United States.

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We do not need a lot of studies and bringing of people together in order to have a food strategy in Canada. We need to dust off some of the old studies and put them into use. We need policies which will do something as far as farm communities and food production in Canada are concerned. We always hear from this government that we need to become self-sufficient in food production. That will never happen with the type of policies the government has. It is time they brought in a policy that will accomplish that.

I wish to speak for a few moments on problems in my constituency with regard to CBC television. I refer in particular to that portion of my riding which extends 250 miles along the United States border. It receives very little, if any, help from CBC television. An accelerated program has been announced. As far as I am concerned, it means the CBC should be going into that area to ensure that the 15,000 people living there receive CBC television without having to pay for it.

There was an application for a French television station in another part of my constituency. It was approved on the basis that there were 500 people who should get this type of reception. This was done under the accelerated program, totally ignoring the obligation to ensure that people in the other areas to which I have referred receive television reception free of charge, like everyone else in Canada. I agree that the people in the area do get television reception; however, it has been necessary to form co-ops—private individuals who put repeater stations in the mountains. It is a costly process and it does not always work. It is not the government who pays for that; it is the people of that area. It is not like in my home town of Kelowna, Toronto or Montreal, where it does not cost anything to see CBC television.

I made an intervention in the CRTC hearing in Vancouver against having a French television station in the Okanagan before providing service to those in the Boundary country. I was not too popular as a result of that intervention. However, I felt the CRTC should know about it and understand what has to be done. In committee hearings here in Ottawa I talked with the president of the CBC about this matter. I told him they had an obligation to the people of that area, and not just on a piecemeal basis in order to soothe somebody's complaint.