

The Address—Mr. J. A. Ross

are more blessed than the Canadian people. Let us look up. Let us think our way out of the difficulty. It will require new thought and new energy; but in my judgment the members of this house are capable of that new thought and of that new energy for devising new means.

Mr. J. A. Ross (Souris): In taking part in this debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, Mr. Speaker, my first remarks should be those of congratulation to the mover and seconder of the address. I thought they both did a masterly job, especially the mover, who was extremely tactful in the delivery of his speech.

I also want to congratulate one who has become a sincere friend of mine since I have been in the House of Commons on his elevation to a cabinet portfolio; I refer to the hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Mr. Harris). I am sure that he will do justice to the position he now occupies, judging from his performance in the years I have known him in this House of Commons.

In the speech from the throne there is reference to the proposal of a general conference early next autumn between the provincial governments and our federal government in order that matters of mutual concern might be discussed. I would think that the welfare of municipal organizations throughout Canada, both urban and rural, should be of some concern now. With that in mind, I believe that heads of provincial and municipal organizations should be invited to participate in this proposed conference. Within this federal cabinet there is apparently a complete lack of understanding of many basic municipal problems. According to the Canadian Parliamentary Guide, I find that not one of the present federal ministers is shown as having had municipal administrative experience. That situation is unique, when you consider the fact that the ministers represent all parts of this nation from coast to coast.

I want to refer especially to the matter of grants to municipalities in lieu of taxation. This matter is also mentioned in the speech from the throne. I happened to receive a copy of lengthy correspondence which the Winnipeg and Manitoba chambers of commerce mailed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) under date of January 30, 1950. I want to endorse wholeheartedly the arguments contained in that correspondence, but I do not intend to quote it. I wish, however, to say that with respect to Winnipeg, in which there is federal property valued at over \$7 million and assessed at \$5 million, that is slightly over 2 per cent of their assessment; therefore under

this 4 per cent regulation of the federal government they are not entitled to any grants. As I say, I want to endorse that argument wholeheartedly.

More than that, at our Manitoba municipal convention last fall, which is recognized as the municipal parliament in Manitoba, the province from which I come, there was keen discussion on this matter of federal grants in lieu of taxation, and a strong resolution was passed there requesting reconsideration of that matter. I would hope that the government would reconsider their attitude, because most if not all of the cities west of the great lakes do not qualify at all under the present regulations.

Then there was the matter of federal aid to education. I do not intend to repeat the arguments that I set forth on this issue at the last session of parliament, but I want to endorse all of the remarks so ably made in debate yesterday by the leader of the Social Credit party (Mr. Low). I thought he did a splendid job with respect to his arguments on federal aid to education. Having regard to my own leader, Mr. Drew, the people of Ontario especially recognize what a splendid job he did and what a splendid reputation he now has as the result of being minister of education in a government in Ontario; and he fully endorses federal aid to education.

In Manitoba the cost of education is borne to the extent of 75 per cent by a levy on real estate. That is an absurd situation. We have districts in which the highest-assessed land in the district has not produced any revenue over a period of three or four years: in one district that was because of flooding. Yet that property pays the biggest tax of any property there, for school purposes. When you think of such an inadequate system, under which 75 per cent of the cost of education throughout the province is obtained through a levy on real estate, you can see that it is completely out of date. Without repeating my arguments of last session, I want to endorse wholeheartedly the matter of federal aid to education and also to say, as was said by the leader of the Social Credit party, that I am greatly disappointed, after our debate last session, that no mention of this matter was contained in the speech from the throne at this time. That matter also was dealt with at the municipal parliament of Manitoba or the municipal convention last fall, and a strong resolution was passed asking federal aid for education and also criticizing severely our provincial department of education in Manitoba for not doing more than they are doing. I am sorry to have to be so critical of our Manitoba Department of Education, but they have