

this is a government of concern, and a government that is determined to bring us a just society. I refer specifically to the Government's concern with regional disparities in Canada. I think I can illuminate that best by dealing with one specific region, the one I know best, the Prairie Provinces of Canada.

What is the position of the Prairie Provinces? We are great natural resource producers. By selling that production in foreign markets we produce foreign exchange—the life-blood of any independent country—to an extent out of proportion to our population. We suffer as a result of that because the prices we receive for our natural resources are subject to world competition. We have a very limited manufacturing industry in the Prairie Provinces, but in buying the manufactured goods that we consume we are subject to a national tariff policy which protects industries mostly located in central Canada. In short, we sell our production in a competitive market, but we buy our manufactured necessities from a protected market.

In addition to that problem, we lack numerical representation in the elected side of the federal Parliament. Out of 265 seats in the other place, the Prairie Provinces only have 45. This does not give us a sufficient bloc of votes, although I hope we have a voice. We also suffer from something that I would like to call corporate disappearance—the tendency of the head offices and controlling agencies of corporations to be attracted by the magnet of Toronto and Montreal, and to move away from the Prairie Provinces.

That, I think, is a fair assessment of the position of the Prairies. When you hear this you may wonder if we are doing so well in the Canadian Confederation. What would happen to western Canada if it separated from the rest of Canada? Immediately it would enjoy a very heavy balance of payments surplus. The foreign exchange earnings, which guarantee a separate country's independence, would be enormous. We could have our own tariff policy, and through that tariff policy we could probably build a fairly healthy secondary industry; but if we chose not to do that, at least we would be able to buy our manufactured requirements at competitive world prices instead of at protected prices.

I think we could impede this corporate disappearance of which we speak if we were a sovereign state. I think many corporations would find it wise to have head offices within the western Canadian region. We would not have to vie with the representation of 45

elected representatives out of 265, to have regional development. We might come out very well, but I say this to you, that is not the feeling in the Prairie Provinces. There is no desire in those provinces to leave Confederation. Rather, the desire is to make a contribution to Confederation. If people tell you that the Prairie Provinces have the wherewithal to leave and are so alienated that they are about to leave, then I suggest to you that you should not believe it.

There is an historical dissatisfaction which probably goes back to the time when those provinces entered Confederation, or even before that. That historical dissatisfaction is exacerbated from time to time by various events. It is exacerbated right now by the fact that we are experiencing grave difficulty in selling our grain. In the course of attempting to achieve a bilingual society, prairie residents were not unmindful of the fact that it appeared that intransigence was rewarded. They thought that maybe they should be intransigent and get the same rewards. I congratulate the Government on its latest initiatives, which make it clear that, while they are prepared to be fair and just in their attitude, they are not prepared to reward intransigence. The people of the Prairie Provinces are concerned but they are not separatists. They want an honest recognition of the contribution they make to Confederation, and an honest concern with their problems.

Honourable senators, I think this Speech from the Throne indicates that this Government has a concern for each of the regions of Canada, and it enunciates that concern in five areas. It talks about the fact that it is going to reduce regional disparities. It states that, despite the fact it is reducing its overall expenditure, it will increase the allocation of revenues to the overcoming of regional disparities. It takes action, and direct action, to improve the marketing of primary resources, which are so important to regions like the Prairies. It undertakes the revision of the Constitution; it also undertakes a direct influence on the corporate community. It does that in talking about the building of a million houses in the next five years, in the White Paper on Taxation, but more specifically in reference to the need for corporations to act as the Government has done to reduce inflation. It states that corporations must follow the Government lead, or the Government will increase the restraints. The last two items are not directly involved with regional development, but they disclose the sort of initiative

[Hon. Mr. Everett.]