

As for regional development, I dare hope that the intention formulated in the Speech from the Throne to extend the application of the Regional Development Incentives Act will be reflected in one of the amendments to the "Ottawa-Quebec" general law, so that the area of Rouville within my constituency, like those of Saint-Hyacinthe and Bagot, will become eligible in all fairness to the grants from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. The "Ottawa-Quebec" agreement must also be reconsidered to meet the expectations of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

As for community transportation, I trust that the rapid transit system through Saint-Hyacinthe, Saint-Hilaire, Beloeil and Montreal which the Liberals were so keen in promising during the last election campaign and even before will finally become a reality in the near future.

These are some of the economic and social questions whose merit the constituents of my riding of Saint-Hyacinthe have asked their federal representative to plead and on which I shall strongly return very soon.

Like a great many other constituencies in Quebec and throughout Canada, Madam Speaker, Saint-Hyacinthe is suffering from the present economic climate which, should it last, would lead us straight to social chaos.

In my riding as elsewhere, the people are suffering from inflation through erosion of their purchasing power. Inflation has just been recognized as a disease in this country. All of a sudden in the Speech from the Throne this government realized that it existed, and required immediate solutions. Inflation suddenly became public enemy number one. So this government must act and deal with the effects and causes of inflation, those that can in any case be controlled within Canada.

Mr. Lucien Saulnier was quite right a few weeks ago when he stated in his report as special investigator in the MUCTC conflict, and I quote:

Non-intervention policies in the complex situation of a drifting economy can only be disastrous for the weak, the non-organized, management as well as workers and the retired—it is a stupid policy.

Unless inflation is curbed, and unless it is dealt with with lucidity and courage, the gap between the rich and the poor will only widen, and one day the delayed intervention of governments in power will only be more costly than all they may venture to do right away.

For the moment, Madam Speaker, since the question can be asked, how is the leadership of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) felt in this area?

I will come back in a few moments to that famous leadership that was indeed proclaimed from all housetops during the election campaign, and even on the station platforms waiting for the arrival of that train that used to boast about its substantiality and that is now filled with emptiness.

I hear the Minister of Environment (Mrs. Sauvé), who laughs at those things, who laughs when the inaction of this government is raised and who during the election campaign was running around not her own riding of Ahuntsic or the riding of Outremont where she lives, but the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe talking to farmers about farming problems and explaining that she had a farm in Saint-Charles in Saint-Hyacinthe, that she was affected

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by the fact that her alfalfa was completely burnt and realized all of a sudden that she rented her farm and that other people were farming it. She was concerned about this, but today it amuses her, as we talk about inflation.

I wish she would go back today to Saint-Hyacinthe and tell people there where we are with inflation. Perhaps she would go back with the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) who was chief organizer in Saint-Hyacinthe, the big sponsor of the whole campaign. He talked to farmers and today, in order to get over their defeat, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of National Health and Welfare would perhaps want to go back and drink powdered milk and say so to the farmers, unless they want to follow the suggestion of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who advocated putting vitamins in beer or promoting wine production. It makes quite a lot of projects.

● (1410)

[English]

This government we now have—I say that with reluctance, because I am sure it is not a government—these people in front of us, went to the people in July and indicated that the problem was inflation and the issue was leadership. Clearly, many Canadians endorsed that view. While it is fair to say that over 50 per cent did not, this government now has an opportunity to justify its mandate with the leadership it has promised.

I was touched by the rather naive reference in the Speech from the Throne to the lack of social unrest in Canada. I know all members of this House would join me in hoping that the facts justify that statement. I am sorry to see the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) leaving the chamber, because I have a few words to say which might interest her greatly. I see she is now coming back.

I am glad the House is consulting the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) to find out whether it is true that powdered milk should be used to combat inflation. When the type of violence that surrounds the United Aircraft dispute in Quebec, the disruption of services brought about by the grain handlers' strike, the metro strike in Montreal and the transportation strike in Toronto can occur in a period of only a few months, it is only those who refuse to see the world as it is who can believe everything is well in Canada, that there is not the beginning of social unrest and that we can continue in the same way.

I remember when inflation was not as it is today, when railwaymen broke through the doors of parliament and postal workers walked for months on Parliament Hill. I remember when this House has been brought back to settle disputes which normal arbitration could not settle. Canadians have a right to know whether we have a government and parliament that is now prepared to face the continuing demands which must emerge when a free economy is saddled with an effective rate of inflation which attacks everybody's earnings, everybody's savings and everybody's future.

We must ask ourselves if this is the time for government and parliament to say only that things could be worse. We on all sides of the House have a responsibility to all the