

The Address

As for the youth of the country, the hon. member heard me say that I am deeply concerned about youth as a person with so many grandchildren of my own. At the same time, I realize that the minister has made a great effort and is putting the youth training plan into place.

To a large degree, it would be a real benefit compared to what we have had in the past. It may not be everything at the start of the program but it will certainly be a start that was not there. I am sure it will grow and prosper. Our young people will prosper by it.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate you on your appointment to the chair.

I know the citizens of Stormont—Dundas, which you represent, are very proud of the effort you have put forth to help them solve their problems throughout the time you have been here. I know that will continue but they can be equally proud for the leadership that you will show in this House. I congratulate you for that. Some comments have been made jokingly about what is the most beautiful riding in this country. To me there is no question that the most beautiful riding in this country is where the heart is and my heart is in my home riding of Essex—Kent. Essex—Kent is the most southerly riding in this country, southwestern Ontario, and very much a rural, agricultural riding, one that has a smattering of small towns like those throughout rural Canada.

• (2125)

There is a great deal of concern in rural Canada about agriculture and agricultural problems. It is really one of the only industries that is so controlled by the weather, by outside forces that governments or others do not control. As a result sometimes they run through very difficult times, although they use the very best technology available to them. Although they are excellent producers they do run into rough times.

Just this past week we had severely cold weather in our riding and much of the soft fruit industry production is in jeopardy because of that hard freeze. That is the reality that agriculture faces. It is not protected from the elements many times and so the economy of much of rural Canada has to be looked at very critically and very carefully by governments.

Certainly Essex—Kent is an area where the people are vibrant. They work hard. They are well educated. They do the very best they can to make sure that their opportunities are fulfilled. There are times when government must be there with support. I feel that it is a concern in rural Canada today and we should make sure that their voices are heard and they are represented well.

I believe this Liberal government will address those concerns as well as all of the other concerns that I heard over the time that we were campaigning for election.

The red book has been mentioned a million times if it has been mentioned once. That red book was not just something that was grabbed out of the air at election time. Three years of consultation, hard work, round table discussions and efforts to develop policy went into that red book and the statements it contained.

The red book tried to address as best it could in 125 pages the concerns and many of the solutions that Canadians would see a Liberal government follow. Quite frankly, there is no question as the Canadian people became more aware of that red book they were quite happy with the solutions the Liberal Party put forward. That is why there are 176 members of the Liberal caucus here in government today.

I believe that the speech from the throne was a very strong reflection of the document that was put in place during the election. There is no question that the document was the blueprint of the direction we shall go. The speech from the throne was not a big political paper of 50 or 60 or 80 pages. It was as reasonably short, concise document that reflected the red book very carefully and brought forward the concerns this Liberal government has. It is important that governments go ahead.

The number one issue that I heard in my riding and as well colleagues across the country whom I have talked to heard was jobs. Certainly we feel that there is a definite direction to fulfil those jobs. A national infrastructure program was put in place so that each community across this country could see some immediate support from the federal government, the provincial governments and municipal governments to make certain that new jobs are brought into their areas.

Every member of this Parliament will see programs in their riding which will reflect this new job development. I have no doubt that when the list came out in my riding just two days ago of the number of dollars that were available for communities to motivate and start up new job creation programs, moneys that will eventually build into longer range job creations, they were very content and very happy. The communication that I received back just two days ago was extremely positive throughout my riding.

• (2130)

The national apprenticeship program, which is a program to help those who are unemployed retrain and redevelop, is there. It is certainly strategic to bring the skills of Canadians up to the levels required by business. It is very important that business, government and the labour force of this country work together as a unit in order to bring about job creation and job training