

The Address—Mr. MacGuigan

the possibility that the Emergency Measures Organization may have a continuing role to play.

I do not want to overlook the other levels of government either. All municipal governments are involved. In Essex County, a conservation authority has been voted down several times but I believe one is likely to be set up at the end of this month. Such a body and the municipalities may have some direct responsibility in dealing with all flooding problems.

In addition, there is the responsibility of the provincial government. I have been in touch with Mr. Bernier, the minister of lands and forests for Ontario, and he expects to be able to announce his government's policy with respect to the problems of lake flooding by the end of this month. In general, Mr. Speaker, after having contacted with half a dozen federal departments, the provincial minister of lands and forests and all the municipalities involved, I have to say that there has been an inadequate response by government in general to this most serious problem.

I would fear that the lake problem is likely to worsen. What we need is some co-ordination of the activities of all governments and departments involved. Action is necessary at the international level, at the national level, at the provincial level—and perhaps some action involving the provinces and states together—and at the municipal level, as well as involvement of bodies like the Ontario Water Resources Commission. We must put the interests of all these governments and bodies of governments into manageable form so that we can have a coherent and total policy to deal with all the problems which result from high lake waters.

At the moment, Mr. Speaker, I see no signs that this is being done and that is why I want to bring it to the floor of the House this afternoon. Whether there is an immediate solution for the problems of high lake levels directly—that is, whether or not we can in some way lower the levels of the lakes—we must still deal with the consequences of the flooding which may occur. We must have policies for holding back water, especially in some of the low lying areas, and we must establish an insurance policy for home owners along the lakes. It is not a viable position for us to suggest to the lakeshore owners that they should move their dwellings or move off their land.

• (1730)

The governments of this country bear a very considerable responsibility to assist the individual who happens to be located along the lakeshore in his battle with these natural forces. I should point out that it is not those who live right on the shore who may be involved. The people who live further inland found in the mid-November storm that they were likely to be as affected. Once the waters cross—the barriers on the shoreline, they may keep on coming. In some cases there is no appreciable flooding at the shoreline, but hundreds of feet inland. Since all the land in Essex county is low-lying, this presents a problem for all property owners, not just those who live along the shore but those who live inland as well.

Perhaps I have said enough to indicate the seriousness of this problem. I must allow time for the following speaker. However, I want to reiterate that we need co-ordinated

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action in this area. We need a coherent explanation to the public, as far as this is possible, by the federal government of the causes of the flooding and whether the solutions are as simple as many people believe them to be. Concerted action must be taken to deal with these problems. If we can have that within the next few months, we may be in a position to deal with the higher lake levels which may come in the spring. If we do not, we will surely bear a great responsibility to the people of Canada. I am not only speaking of the federal government but of the collective governments of Canada. They will bear a responsibility to the people in these areas for not having acted when there was time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Would the hon. member permit a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member knows he can ask a question only with the hon. member's consent.

Mr. Duncan M. Beattie (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise and follow the many fine replies to the Speech from the Throne. This will probably be one of the shortest speeches, because of the time; but one of the best speeches I ever heard was also one of the shortest. It was an after-dinner speech. It consisted of only four words, "I'll pick up the check".

As a new member serving his apprenticeship in this House, I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and your deputies on your appointments to the prestigious and important positions in which you now serve.

I am indeed the fortunate one in representing the riding of Hamilton Mountain. I say this in all sincerity, because I collected only 40 per cent of the popular vote. Let me assure you now, though, Mr. Speaker, as well as the 60 per cent who wanted a representative other than me, that I shall be constant to my duties and I promise to do the best I can for my country, Canada, in general and my riding in particular.

From Mountain lookout the visitor enjoys a scenic panorama with miles of residential and commercial developments in the foreground; in the middle distance, the heavy industry of Canada's third most important manufacturing city and Canada's two largest steel mills, the whole framed by the dramatic Burlington skyway in the background. Front and centre in Canada's golden horseshoe area, Hamilton is the industrial heart of the nation, at the strategic west end of Lake Ontario.

Only one third of Hamilton's labour force lives in the actual city. As is the trend in most large metropolises, many workers now live in the suburbs and commute to the city. Today 30 per cent of the population lives atop the escarpment, hence the term "split-level city" and hence the name Hamilton Mountain riding, which I proudly represent. I say this with great humility, Mr. Speaker, as a member of a large family that emigrated from my native land of Scotland 22 years ago.

Last week two hon. members stated with great pride the fact that they now represent ridings formerly represented by fathers of confederation. Well, let me tell you, Sir, I