

*Speech from the Throne***AFTER RECESS**

The House resume at 8 p.m.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, when the House recessed at six o'clock I was pointing out to hon. members that the basic criticism we direct at the present government led by the Prime Minister is that it has failed to deal realistically with economic and financial matters. Instead of being presented with a co-ordinated, national economic policy in which the priorities would have been set by the people and the people's representatives, we have been led through an incomprehensible maze plotted by this super group surrounding the Prime Minister's office and involved in all the activities of the government generally. The result is, Mr. Speaker, that the private sector of the economy has been stifled because of the smothering effect of the super group.

I recall the words of a distinguished Senator who put on record in the other place precisely what has happened. I read from a report in the *Globe and Mail* written under the heading, "Liberal Senator attacks policies of government":

Senator Daniel Lang, . . . Toronto lawyer and business executive, charged that the Trudeau government is alienating businessmen by its tax legislation, its proposed changes in competition and labour laws and its promotion of friendship with the Soviet Union.

He argued that the future of Canadian confederation itself depends on good relations between business and government and called for a rapid return to that condition of mutual respect—'

Senator Lang, former treasurer and campaign chairman for the Liberal party in Ontario, was speaking in a Senate debate on the Canadian economy.

He raised issues that have been the subject of growing complaints by businessmen lately.

He said private business was uncertain and fearful of administrative powers given to the public service.

I am afraid that many in the private sector regard this bureaucracy as aloof, intransigent, doctrinaire and oftentimes hostile,' he said.

It is obvious that some hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches have become concerned by the present economic course of the administration. I was interested in a speech that crossed my desk not long ago. It was delivered to the Canadian Club in the Hotel Vancouver on Friday February 4, by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis), who is the hon. member for Capilano, if I may refer to him by naming his constituency. The title of the speech was, "Canada's economic Oscar".

According to the speech, which continued for 21 pages, the Minister of the Environment was obviously more concerned about the political environment than about the physical environment, because he was at great pains to point out that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds. I read from page 18 of that speech the following remarks:

I know you're worried about our new Competition Act. But this legislation is being withdrawn. It's being rewritten. The emphasis is being put, increasingly, on competition. I'm sure that you agree, at least in principle, that competition is a good thing. More competition rather than less will be a good thing for Canada just as it has been a good thing elsewhere—

Confidence and competition; the two go hand in hand. I personally believe in an open economy. I believe, wholeheartedly, in individual initiative. I believe in private enterprise. I believe, also, that Canadians can be enterprising.

[Mr. Speaker.]

• (2010)

I agree that Canadians can be enterprising if they are given a chance and not smothered under the overwhelming influence of the present bureaucratic structure of government particularly in the office of the Prime Minister. I have a recent comment on the attitude of business toward government policy as reported in the *Globe and Mail* "Report on business" of February 23. Hon. members can read this report for themselves. The article is headlined, "Economic Council predicts slowdown in capital spending", and I quote:

The veil of gloom that permeated business circles last October, and has only recently been partly lifted, has yielded the most pessimistic forecast of capital spending plans ever made by the Economic Council of Canada.

The president of DuPont found fault with industrial and tariff policies. I quote the following excerpt of his words:

Current government policy is for an open economy and industry that is world-competitive. But this is not consistent with a proposed new Competition Act that would fragment industry, with regional-development policies that have philosophical merit but are economically disastrous, with a technical innovation system that is different from and more restrictive than those of other areas.

The former minister of consumer and corporate affairs is a neighbour of the hon. member for Capilano, the Minister of the Environment. I am sure that the transition in ministerial responsibility is further proof of the growing disease that exists among the business community and the Canadian body politic. It is not only in big business; it also affects small business, farmers and wage earners. We were recently in our constituencies for a particularly long recess. If hon. members will speak the truth on the matter, I am sure they will admit they were beset and besieged by farmers, businessmen and indeed all Canadians with regard to the uncertainties arising from the impact of the so-called tax reform measure that was forced through the House under closure just before the Christmas recess.

Last week a member of the House, a former deputy prime minister, the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), summed it up in these words, "The government's economic policies are stupid and even subversive." That sums up the situation as seen by someone who obviously had inside information as a key member of the Trudeau administration.

I want to speak briefly on a matter that I know something about personally, and refer to comments made by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) in his speech in the House on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. He gave forth, under the title "The quality of Canadian life":

We want to safeguard those diversities, to give them full play in the shaping of a proud Canadianism which reflects all the elements of our society.

The hon. gentleman was reading from a printed text that was distributed to the press and members of the House concerning in general terms the quality of Canadian life. He was not necessarily dealing with economic matters. I want to give the hon. gentleman credit; since he assumed his portfolio he has grown in stature in office. From the quotation I have just read to hon. members, obviously he has gained wide understanding of the new dimensions in Canadian confederation.