

The Address—Mr. Morgan

As I was unable to ask a question during the question period, I would like to ask the Chair if, in view of the importance for the Montreal Olympic Committee of the budget it must submit on February 3, the federal government still intends to refuse financial assistance for these games?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member could put this question only with the unanimous consent of the House and it is with reluctance that I allow members to ask questions after raising on a question of privilege or on a point of order once the question period has ended.

The hon. member might ask his question tomorrow since it is not urgent. At any rate I shall give the hon. member priority at that time.

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• (1500)

[English] **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Tuesday, January 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Trevor Morgan (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I have learned that it is traditional to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high office which you now hold; but what I have to say to Your Honour is not out of tradition nor out of custom but out of sincere sentiment, well founded. Your reputation, Sir, has gone before you; you are not like a prophet who is without honour in his own land.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Morgan: There is one thing on which I must compliment this government, new as they may be, and that is the appointment of the Deputy Speaker, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). I believe in the principle that justice must not only be done but must be shown to be done, and I do congratulate Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as a novice in this chamber I listened extremely carefully to the Speech from the Throne as presented to this House. I listened to and evaluated what other members said here, older and wiser ones than I, what they thought about the Speech from the Throne and just what it meant to the people of Canada. The sublimation of all this listening and all this evaluation can, for me, be reduced to a very few lines:

There was a young man from Australia,
On his backside was painted a dahlia,
The artistry was there,
The resemblance was there,
But the smell was a horrible failure.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Morgan: Mr. Speaker, I have the proud privilege of representing the riding of St. Catharines. The city of St. Catharines lies in the midst of the industrial fruitland. That is not a contradiction in terms, for in and about the

[Mr. La Salle.]

riding of St. Catharines is the tender fruit industry which is a \$50 million-a-year industry. This has a great deal of commercial vitality to the city of St. Catharines. St. Catharines has been potentially a very active industrial centre. I say "has been" and "potentially," for if the government ever attempted to sacrifice the safeguards of the auto pact, the dynamics of this industry would be destroyed. If this should ever happen, there should be such a hue and cry from the people in my riding that even the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) would quickly quit the quiescent quilt where he now silently sleeps in the shade.

I have indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, that the city of St. Catharines is the business and commercial hub of the Niagara region, a region comprising some 350,000 people. St. Catharines is also the seat of government for the new regional municipality of Niagara which has been in existence for just over three years. I had the privilege of serving on that council from its inception until my election to this House.

The financial plight of this municipality, as well as all other municipalities across the country, must not and cannot be ignored by the government. More money must be funnelled into municipal coffers in order that the heavy burden on the home owner, through real estate taxation, can be alleviated. A distinction must surely be made between taxation representing services for people and taxation representing services for property. There is no logical reason why services such as welfare, education, hospitals, homes for the aged, day care centres, the work of children's aid societies, and so on, should be charged against land and buildings and become a burden on the home owner through real estate taxation.

The recent tri-level conference of federal, provincial and municipal leaders was perhaps a recognition of this problem and a first step, if a somewhat tentative one, toward a solution. The government has it in its power right now to assist the home owner in the dilemma in which he finds himself. I have already placed a notice of motion on the order paper calling for an amendment to the Income Tax Act to allow a home owner to deduct the real estate tax paid by him up to a maximum of \$500 and to deduct from his taxable income, as well, the mortgage interest paid by him up to a maximum of \$2,000. I shall, of course, have more to say on this topic at a later date.

This particular problem has been aggravated for the citizens of St. Catharines by the lack of growth in the industrial sector. In a recent survey of some 1,200 industries throughout 21 major industrial cities across Canada, in terms of growth the city of St. Catharines was twenty-first on the list. Dead last! The national average in terms of growth was just under 7 per cent. The percentage for St. Catharines was just over three.

I suggest there are two major reasons for this situation. First, there has been an unrealistic and unsympathetic approach on the part of DREE and by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce in making the grants and supplying the incentives necessary in the region of Niagara. Second—and I agree this is a provincial matter—there has been an unwarranted rise in hydro rates to power users. This has caused several industries to leave St. Catharines and the region of Niagara.