

region's special features. Canada's attractions will be aggressively marketed, both at home and abroad, and especially in the United States.

Initiatives to assist tourism are welcome. However, the major problem facing the Canadian tourism industry at the present time is that of cost. With the exception of a non-committal statement on air fares, this is not addressed in the Throne Speech. For example, before the September increase in the excise tax on alcohol, the cost of liquor to restaurants in New York State was equal to only three-quarters of the cost to Ontario restaurants.

Gasoline prices are higher in Canada than in the United States, almost double, providing east-west travellers with an incentive to travel through the United States rather than through Canada. Government decisions are often made without regard to their implication on the travel industry. More must be done in this area to be realistic.

I did find an interesting point, Mr. Speaker in the following statement:

Legislation will be introduced to confirm the tax incentives for research and development announced in the April Recovery Budget.

I would rather it had been produced and debated last April, following the budget. But, better now than never. Let the Government bring it on. I am pleased to see the Government again "intends to seek a Canada-Japan auto agreement to the benefit of both countries". And guess what, Mr. Speaker? The Via Rail System will be upgraded. I remember not too long ago when the Government insisted it had to cut VIA. I remember our task force and its finding of a need for VIA. The Liberal Government cut VIA anyway. It is nice to see the Government can have a change of heart now and then.

I am in favour of the "environment 2000" concept coupled with additional funding for forestry research and development. Forestry is a renewable resource which we must protect and develop. I only hope seedlings can be found. In future maybe the Government should ensure the resources are available before the project is commenced.

There is a paragraph that reads:

Part time work is a growing trend. Consultations on pension rights and fringe benefits for the part-time work force will be undertaken with provincial Governments, labour and business.

I applaud that statement, Mr. Speaker. However, consultations are not enough. We have reports and we have recommendations. What we need is action directed toward equality for the part-time worker.

The Canada Health Act which has been introduced in the House by the Minister is mentioned here. I am strongly in favour of our medicare system in Canada and I also hope we can maintain its universality, without user fees and extra billing. In fact, I hope we will even be able to expand it further into necessary areas. But I remind the Minister that all of this can only be done with adequate federal funding, real commitment on her behalf, and co-operation with the Provinces.

It looks as though there may be some hope for mortgage interest protection for home owners and some attention given to the need for long-term farm, fishing and small business

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financing. I await more information on these programs, Mr. Speaker, to see whether the offer mentioned in passing in this speech is actually forthcoming.

There is reference to bankruptcy legislation for farmers, and I quote:

High interest rates have taken a substantial toll among businesses, and especially among farmers, revealing important weaknesses in our bankruptcy laws. Revisions will be sought to increase the flexibility of these laws to introduce a system of pre-bankruptcy arbitration for farmers, and to give greater protection to the wages of workers.

I await that as well, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to point out that this will be the sixth bankruptcy Bill introduced by this Government in the last nine years. The Bankruptcy Act has been on and off the *Order Paper* since 1974, when the Prime Minister made an election promise for its introduction. Previous Bills include C-60, S-11, S-14, S-9, and C-19.

There were a few good ideas in the Throne Speech. I have tried to look at them positively. I am concerned, as I said earlier, that they are just that, ideas, skeletons without flesh. I look forward to actual presentation in the House. I must admit though, Mr. Speaker, I fear all we will see is the smoke and mirror items before a possible election, with the remainder hanging in the air again as election promises, just as we have seen so often in the past, along with capital gains, tax exemption for farmers and cheap gasoline. If this Government really wanted to do something for agriculture, it could introduce the capital gains exemption, allow agri-bonds to be developed by the Farm Credit Corporation and remove taxes from gasoline and other energy products used in the agri-food industry.

● (1650)

Canada does not need such phrases in the Throne Speech as: reallocated resources, assist in finding jobs, flexible use of UIC funds, planning consultation, negotiations are under way, will be planned in co-operation with, moved to facilitate establishment of, intends to seek, additional attention will be given, consultation will be undertaken. What we need is concrete actions and directions from this Government, not more promises.

The country has lost confidence in this Government. This Speech from the Throne, even with its few good ideas, will not regain that confidence. Once you have lost confidence, it cannot be easily regained, if at all.

I see my time is just about up. In closing, I call on the Government to go to the people, call for a new mandate, not on this Throne Speech of smoke and mirrors but issues based on concrete proposals, and allow the electorate of this country to pass judgment on its past actions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): There is a ten-minute period for questions, answers, comments.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to say a few words. It is important, I say in particular to the Hon. Member who preceded me, that we look back a little bit before we look ahead to see if we have in fact been a Government that has been more thought or