

*The Address—Mr. Fleming*

member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier). It is obvious that his extensive academic background in political affairs has added much to his ability to serve his constituents well.

I perceive three major thrusts in the Speech from the Throne. The first is an effective and sensitive response to the factors of inflation. This is not the most politically easy response, true, and not a simplistic response but it is one that is fitting for our circumstances, one that can work within our system and will help us overcome our problem and help our people generally. It is not a simplistic approach. The simplistic approach has been tried and found wanting. I feel that the sooner the official opposition drops its wage and price control proposal, the sooner it will gain credibility with the people of Canada. Wage and price controls are painful and costly in application, painful and more costly in exercising and most painful and most costly when you try to escape from them. They have been tried in the United States but did not work, as the President himself admitted. They were tried in Great Britain and brought about the worst class confrontation to hit that great nation in many a decade.

Selective and sensitive reaction to the problem is not the easiest way of dealing with it, but it involves the most realistic approach. We have already seen examples of the government's realistic approach in its aid to pensioners. It is all very well to pooh-pooh these government expenditures. It is all very well for the Conservatives to make a great song and dance about amounts contained in estimates and supplementary estimates and to claim we are spending ourselves out of existence. It is those same people who thought they could outdo what the government, the NDP or even the *Créditistes* want to do. They were the ones who would give the Canadian people more. One day they talk out of the left side of their mouths and on the next out of the right side. When it came to helping pensioners, they talked out of the left side of their mouths, but when it came to estimates they talked out of the right side. Somehow they always seem to talk more easily out of the right side of the mouth.

Aid to pensioners has been increased by more than 25 per cent in the past 18 months. That is not to say that our pensioners will have as much as they deserve, or as much as will enable them to buy some of the luxuries available to people in the labour force today. I admit that we must try to do more. Nevertheless, the government's action shows that a great deal has been done. That expenditure accounts for part of the increase in spending. As I say, the money is to be spent in the months ahead.

The government has also increased family allowances. Surely to goodness, when we are faced with inflation which is world-wide—and this has been said a million times, despite the hearing difficulties of the opposition—it is up to us to help the needy. We have acted by bringing in these increases. Actually, in our first major increase we just about tripled family allowances so that children who are helpless will not suffer and children from poor homes will not be an additional burden. Having done these things, the government in a sensitive and selective way acted to help consumers by supporting the price of bread and of milk, two basic commodities which are essential to the health of Canadians.

[Mr. Fleming.]

The government acted in the field of energy. I will deal with that matter in a minute. Again, in this field there was explicit action in treating Canadians fairly and protecting them from increased oil prices in the world. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the cabinet will, as set out in the Speech from the Throne and in accordance with the commitment given last summer and early last fall, act as necessary and continue to take advantage of our resources in Canada so that we may protect our own people and, especially, protect the defenceless. The government's past actions have again proved that sensitive and selective action is right and that we should not adopt the simplistic formula which has failed both in Great Britain and in the United States. The government said it would follow this course. It has given a public commitment that all the negative stridency of the opposition party cannot hide.

There is a further point in this Speech from the Throne which apparently has been overlooked by the media. The point is that little attention has been given to the pledge or to the commitment of the government that it would consult with the provinces after it had considered a number of proposals. The government gave the pledge or commitment that it would act selectively, which is what brought in pension increases, family allowance increases and protection to consumers. The throne speech says that, particularly under the Ministry of National Health and Welfare, further necessary aid will be coming and that these proposals are still under discussion with the provinces.

So the first thrust of the speech is with regard to selective, sensitive action against inflation, protecting the defenceless and doing our best to help all Canadian consumers. I believe there is a second element or thrust to the throne speech. Measures must now be taken for the long-range protection of consumers across Canada. Nothing is more important than measures taken to encourage our farmers and fishermen to produce more. Because of the boom and bust conditions experienced by these workers in the past, nothing can be of greater assistance to farmers, fishermen and consumers than a stabilization program, especially in general agriculture, including prairie grain farmers.

These measures must not be enacted to be effective for one year only; they must be effective from this point forward. Notice that I said they should include the prairie grain farmers as well. Did I hear members mention that that would involve government action in western Canada? Supplies will be increased, fair farm incomes will be assured and Canadian consumers will reap the price advantages of Canadian produce. All this, much to the political agony of my friends opposite, will develop as this session progresses.

The third thrust of the throne speech has to do with regional disparity and its correction. That thrust does not specifically have to do with DREE. That program, of course, is giving assistance to areas of need such as the Maritimes, the like of which has never before been seen. I might mention, however, that DREE is not a success story in eastern Canada alone. Take the Medicine Hat story. That town is in Alberta, in case anybody has forgotten. DREE grants have been the basis for the development of energy resources and related industry in that city in