

The Address—Miss MacDonald

eliminate the traditional double fare applicable between Ottawa and Hull.

For many years now, the members of Parliament representing the Quebec part of the Ottawa region have asked for this measure, which has now taken the form of a \$500,000 contribution from the National Capital Commission, made in the name of the federal government. The fact that there is now a transport commission on both sides of the Ottawa River probably helped to reach such an agreement.

● (2040)

[English]

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech which we are now debating is conspicuous more for what it does not say than for what it does. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has described it as a matter of fact document. This is synonymous with saying that it is prosaic, ponderous, pretentious; in fact, dull. It lacks imagination, compassion, identifiable objectives. It is, however, a true reflection of the government which presented it—stolid, complacent, self-satisfied, even sanctimonious; much like the Pharisee who looked at others in their misery and thanked God that he was not as they. That attitude on the part of the Liberals opposite, Mr. Speaker, is the cause of much of the malaise in this country today.

We are saddled with a government that lacks daring, innovation, imagination; a government that lags along day after day in the same old rut, lacking the will to fight the problems that beset millions of Canadians, afraid to depart from the well-worn practices of a bygone era and come up with some contemporary policies; a government that was old the day it was born.

It makes parliament watchers wonder whatever happened to such spirited individuals as Walter Gordon, Judy LaMarsh and Joe Greene with their free-wheeling ideas—individuals whom the Liberal Party used to encourage. One is left with the distinct impression that cabinet solidarity today means thinking alike, acting alike, doing nothing to upset the uniformity and sameness which characterizes this government.

Mr. Sharp: You are much too optimistic.

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the government lacks leadership which is responsive and sensitive to the needs of the country, and that lack is sadly reflected in the Speech from the Throne.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Canadians today are beset by fears of inflation and the spiralling cost of living. For thousands upon thousands on fixed incomes, their weekly shopping is an agony to be endured as the purchasing power of their dollar goes steadily downward. There is no relief in sight, certainly not in this throne speech, for the escalating costs of bread, milk, sugar, meat—the staples; no relief in sight for the thousands of would-be home owners for whom the cost of purchasing a house is prohibitive. Nothing in this speech indicates that the government is concerned with preven-

[Mr. Clermont.]

tive health plans. Instead, the government adds to the worries of millions of Canadians by reducing the rate of funding available to the Medical Research Council from a 5.4 per cent annual increase to 2.5 per cent for 1974-75.

Under Liberal management, the prolonged scientific and medical struggle to combat cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, genetic defects—all diseases—is downgraded. Senior medical researchers are being denied the funding they so grievously require. Some of our most talented scientists will be forced to leave Canada to continue their research in countries whose governments place a much higher premium on health protection. It is a sad commentary on the Liberal government that it sees fit to spend \$100 per capita on unemployment insurance, but a mere \$2 per capita on medical research. It is ludicrous to think that this government can spend \$2 billion annually for unemployment insurance and only \$40 million next year for medical research. Surely Canadians have a right and a duty to demand that government priorities and spending are brought into line with reality.

Mr. Speaker, reference to Canada's native peoples is almost non-existent in this throne speech. This cannot be attributed merely to the oversight of one minister but, rather, to the collective decision of an entire cabinet. Brief reference is made to rural and native housing programs. We shall have to await legislation for details, but I trust these programs will apply to native housing both on and off the reserves. Over 80 per cent of current native housing is substandard, and the rate of housing starts for native people has been running at half the rate of that for other Canadians. I trust the new legislation is designed to eliminate both these inequities and to eliminate the hardships in settlements such as Fort Rae, where 1,000 natives live in small wooden homes at temperatures sometimes of 60 degrees to 70 degrees below zero, homes heated primarily by wood stoves, homes without running water and indoor facilities. And there are many native communities such as Fort Rae across Canada.

There is nothing in the throne speech to indicate that the government is prepared to recognize and accept the principle of aboriginal rights; nothing to show that a native communications policy which will provide for continuing dialogue in their own languages is in the offing; nothing to indicate that the government is willing to meet its commitment to provide funding to Indian organizations so that the Indian Act can be revised by and for Indians, both male and female. I trust the minister will be making positive statements in all these areas in the near future.

● (2050)

The throne speech does make specific mention of guaranteed loans and other forms of assistance to both farmers and fishermen to assist them in purchasing or modernizing their equipment; incentives to increase Canada's catch of unexploited stocks of fish; and assistance to young farmers to provide sufficient financial incentives for them to establish themselves in farming. We will insist that these programs will apply, without question, to native people both on and off reserves and that the government will not try to fob-off requests from Indian bands for assistance under these new proposals by referring them to the ill-conceived, poorly administered, highly restrictive