

Speech from the Throne

United States. It would, therefore, be disastrous if the Canadian-U.S. trade talks should fail.

I should like to encourage our efficient Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) to be firm in one aspect of the negotiations. I refer to the 1965 auto pact which brought many benefits to Canada. I recall that when it was introduced the official opposition had reservations about its value and the NDP were lukewarm toward it. But now, having seen the beneficial results, they are clamoring for it. I would simply suggest that the United States should consider not only the present net advantage to Canada resulting from the auto pact but should bear in mind the advantages the United States has had over a long period of years. I am confident the government will not agree with the United States' point of view which requires a current Canadian deficit in the trade in motor vehicles.

Another area of national interest is our immigration policy, and the disturbing statement made by a Toronto lawyer at the Canadian Bar Association meeting. This man has twice examined certain aspects of immigration for the Canadian government, once five years ago when he inquired into the problem of deserting seamen and again two years ago when he was asked to report on the increasing number of non-immigrants applying for permanent residence. In his speech, he dismissed the traditional concept of Canada as a vast empty land. He said, and I quote:

Sure, we still have millions of acres with a negligible population, but many of those acres can never support more than a marginal population. Maybe, instead of blindly encouraging people to come to this land of opportunity, we should make a serious study to find out just how many people each region can reasonably support. It may be that natural increase would cause us to reach that desirable figure without any immigration.

The number of people which this country can support can never be reached by natural increase unless the women of Canada are bent on having no less than 10 children each, a preposterous proposition which no one takes seriously. At the time of Confederation, 105 years ago, Canada had a population of little more than three million. It has taken all that time to add 18 million to our present population of approximately 21 million. The second century is a good time, not to consider reducing the importance of the immigration department or reducing the number of immigrants, but to continue a reasonable policy of selection. By that I do not mean to let in only university graduates. I am referring to the artisan, the tradesman and laborer, of whom there is a definite shortage.

The development of a ribbon of civilization above the 49th parallel received the attention of our Canadian pioneers in the first century of our history. As this ribbon widened towards the north, unlocking vast treasures of timber and minerals, and settlements prospered on the Prairies, we experienced a period of great achievement, which the generous immigration policy at the beginning of the century made possible. Canada's history is enlaced with the story of people from many lands coming here in search of peace, freedom and prosperity. People from every country around the globe and from every walk of life came here to build a new life and to enrich Canada with character and tradition.

[Mr. Badanai.]

• (1420)

As to the criticisms which appear in the newspapers commenting adversely on the work of the Department of Manpower and Immigration, containing scathing remarks about the way in which immigration is being handled, I would point out that any deficiencies which may be apparent in the department do not extend to the immigration offices overseas. I have met some of the immigration officers and, believe me, I have never met people more dedicated, more industrious or more faithful to their trust than those in charge of our immigration services overseas. This is the case whether they serve in London, in Marseille, in Paris or in Glasgow, Scotland.

I hope the Prime Minister will consider, if not in the course of this session of Parliament then certainly in the next, adopting a new concept of the north based on a policy of encouraging and assisting suitable immigrants to settle in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. These regions cover approximately 1,400,000 square miles of land rich in minerals, gas, oil, iron, copper, gold, furs and fish, yet less than 40,000 people, counting all the Indians, the Eskimos and the whites, live north of the 60th parallel. The adoption of such a policy will take courage, but fortunately our Prime Minister is richly endowed with that quality.

Finally, may I say that my constituents in the City of Thunder Bay are very grateful to the government for its grant of \$18,720 toward hiring a co-ordinator, a secretary and ten surveyors in connection with an initiative incentive program, the purpose of which is to evaluate the need of the community for an auditorium complex which would include a community cultural and sports centre. It appears to be the considered opinion of people in Thunder Bay, which is part of the constituency of my hon. friend from Port Arthur (Mr. Andras), that this is one of the city's most pressing needs. When a scheme has been approved, financial assistance from all levels of government will be required. I trust the federal government will favourably consider making a generous grant at that time.

The opposition characterized the Throne Speech as being without substance. Unbiased people will see in it a most inspiring legislative program, the like of which has not been often heard in this chamber.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, the outstanding thing about the Speech from the Throne delivered on Thursday is that almost unbelievably it contains no proposals for dealing with the country's most important problem, that of unemployment involving no less than 665,000 people, amounting to 7.7 per cent of the work force, who cannot find jobs.

If Your Honour would search through that pyramid of platitudes piled one on top of another for a full hour last Thursday, and listen to the Prime Minister's hymn of self-praise delivered in the House on Friday you would not find a scrap of evidence of any plan designed to increase production through stimulating the economy thereby making jobs more readily available to Canadians. Members of this House and the public generally have a right to ask why this should be the case. Everyone admits that unemployment is the No. 1 problem facing the country today. Why is there no mention of any plan to overcome it?