

*The Address—Miss Bégin*

The inflationary crisis was not as serious, making all due allowance, in Canada as in other developed countries although it involved a heavier burden for certain Canadians than for others. As a matter of fact, three of these groups that are often forgotten by people who live in the cities will be affected by the measures concerning farmers, fishermen and seasonal workers engaged in these sectors of our economy. Do they really have the choice to leave their area for something else? Do they wish to do so? And what would we do without them, as they are the source of food production on which we are entirely dependent and on which—I am referring to huge western grain farms—the balance of payments of Canada and its capacity in international trade operations may depend?

There are about 300,000 farmers, 200,000 farm workers (including the farmers' wives) and 100,000 fishermen in this country. If we take into account all those who depend on them, we get almost 2.5 million people. There is no doubt that they have been, since the war, the poor relatives of an agricultural economy that became an industrial and urban economy.

They in turn will therefore benefit, through imaginative but simple measures, from the assistance already introduced last summer under various forms for the benefit of Canadians who fall within the categories most vulnerable to cost of living increases, that is the unemployed, the pensioners, families living on low or fixed incomes, with children under 18.

Much remains to be done, however, given the appropriate measures since, in spite of increases of 5 per cent in the employment rate and 7 per cent in the national growth rate, the rate of unemployment, although low, nonetheless reached 6 per cent according to Statistics Canada figures.

Still from the point of view of progressive elimination of disparities, I welcome those parts of the Speech from the Throne which deal with the priority status promised to consumers so that they may enjoy reasonable prices, particularly for food.

[*English*]

Regarding regional disparities, all that the federal government can do to improve railway passenger services in urban areas, suburban rapid transit, and to serve the more isolated Canadian communities will be welcomed by Canadians. We hope, also, that fairer proposals concerning rates for the transportation of goods, which was discussed at the western economic opportunities conference, will be forthcoming. In the same vein, small businessmen follow with great hope the setting up of the new federal business development bank and are anxious to see it in full operation as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I say quite bluntly on the question of erasing inequalities that it is about time our country established a federal human rights commission, after at least six years of argument among departments as to who is the most discriminated against, Indians, workers, women or the ethnic minorities, and through which department the commission would report. It is important that such a commission should have jurisdiction in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories and should be directly responsible to parliament and to the territorial councils. Strong powers of investigation and of prosecu-

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tion, in addition to the usual powers of such commissions, are essential to give it real value.

● (1730)

As recommended in the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada—I think it is recommendation No. 165—I strongly share the opinion that past experiences give all indications that for a limited period of time, say seven to ten years, a distinct division dealing specifically with protection of women's rights is needed. For those hon. colleagues who do not understand what is *sous-entendu* here, we can have a special multiparty caucus. Unfortunately, the recent report of progress in 1973 on the status of women, published by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), is completely silent on this very important point. As to the statement that Crown corporations will have to undertake positive action to encourage the assignment and advancement of women, there is no need to stress that the CBC will become for women the very symbol of this effort at simple justice, which should also affect many women employees of the CN and of Air Canada, to single out only the biggest and maybe the most traditional of these public employers.

[*Translation*]

My time is nearly up, Mr. Speaker, and I have spoken on the first part only of the Speech from the Throne—the phasing out of disparities in this country. There will be other occasions to discuss modern national achievements which meet the aspirations of Canadians and of which the Canadian oil industry is the symbol, as was so well pointed out by the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McRae).

Finally, we no longer have to feel guilty about being “a natural resources country”. However, the fact is that we are a modern, industrialized country and yet underdeveloped, in the hands of international cartels that are now discreetly being called “multinationals”. It is suggested that there would be only 15 governments in the world—Canada not included—whose budget would be as big as the budget of those cartels. We started at different paces, depending on the areas of this country, to realize that massive and non-diversified foreign investment not regulated by a “code of ethics” is nearly the opposite of foreign aid.

Still, I would not want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, without endorsing the concern of Canadians for less developed or poorer countries, as suggested by the mover and the recorder of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, my colleagues for Spadina and Sherbrooke (Messrs. Stollery and Pelletier).

I think Canadians want “national” achievements but they are also conscious of others and, above all, they want to contribute with them to the development of that “new economic order” wished for in Washington by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp).

**Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated the speech of our able and charming colleague from Saint-Michel (Miss Bégin) and I would like to have the time to follow through with the arguments and ideas so clearly expressed in her speech. Unfortunately, time is of the essence and I know that she will realize the need for me to make my own