

The Address—Mr. Herbert

in the areas best suited to our talents. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, and after full debate, we all accept the majority opinion of our party. We vote together. Diversity of opinion and solidarity of purpose is our strength.

Another matter raised since the election is the discussion, reactivated by the government of Quebec, relating to the transfer of the Ste. Anne de Bellevue veterans' hospital to provincial control. This has raised doubts and fears in the minds of both veteran patients and employees. The problem of shortage of nurses at this hospital has not been helped by the news of the discussion. The town in which this hospital is situated is also concerned, since federal compensation to this municipality forms a large part of its annual budget. Transfer of control could mean a cut in revenue of \$200,000 per year. An early statement on the probable course of events at this hospital is imperative.

I stated earlier that I would be making some reference to the state of agriculture, specifically in my constituency but more generally throughout the province of Quebec. The British North America Act provides that parliament and the provincial legislatures shall exercise concurrent jurisdiction with regard to agriculture, subject to the provision that when a provincial law is repugnant to a federal enactment, the latter shall prevail. This means that a provincial statute cannot apply within the boundaries of the province whose legislature enacted it, if it conflicts with or duplicates a federal enactment. In other words, it shall apply only when the subject matter it deals with is not regulated by federal legislation or, if the said subject matter is regulated by a federal enactment, when it merely supplements the federal statute.

● (1520)

The power to legislate with regard to agriculture does not imply the power to legislate with regard to the disposal and marketing of agricultural products. It does not allow the federal government to legislate with regard to the disposal and marketing of agricultural products in any province, nor does it allow a province to legislate with regard to the disposal and marketing of agricultural products within its boundaries. If the federal government wants to legislate with regard to marketing, it must invoke the power it possesses to legislate with regard to trade and commerce, in which case its legislation, to be valid, must regulate international and interprovincial commerce only. As for a province, it can also legislate with regard to marketing, either because of its power with regard to property and civil rights within its territory or because of its residuary power over all things local in nature within its territory. The exact scope of provincial powers with regard to marketing is unknown, but it seems to include the creation of a marketing agency which shall be designated as the only buyer for a product which the local farmers want to sell on the local market.

The basis of Canada's national agricultural policy is the premise that "a stable agriculture is in the interests of the national economy and that farmers as a group are entitled to a fair share of the national income". Quebec's Department of Agriculture and Colonization has one overriding and clearly defined objective: it wants to make agriculture profitable and bring it into line with the social and economic needs of the 1970s. The over-all trend in Quebec agriculture is a declining farm population and a reduction

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in total farmland. In the last decade, the farm population decreased by one half. It would therefore appear that although the federal and provincial objectives are excellent and the jurisdictional responsibilities are reasonably definable, somewhere and somehow the respective legislative bodies are failing to meet their objectives. This problem must be tackled as a priority consideration by this parliament.

Questions in my constituency during the campaign, and since the election, on the subject of inflation fall into three groupings: government programs, regulations concerning the application of these programs, and the public service or bureaucracy which administers these programs. Regarding the programs, while there was often broad criticism it was difficult for me to pin down specific suggestions for change. Because, personally, I dislike generalizations, I am not bringing back to this parliament any ideas for change. However, the way in which the application of the programs is handled has been criticized in great detail. The three matters most mentioned are the Unemployment Insurance Commission's handling of the unemployed, the Local Initiatives Program, and the Opportunities for Youth program. All these emanate from the one Ministry of Manpower and Immigration.

It is not hard to understand the background to the criticism which originates in my constituency. There is a shortage of help in many skills, as well as a shortage of unskilled labour, and this in a province where the total rate of unemployment is too high. This shortage of labour covers all segments of the economy, such as industrial help, farm help and service help, and it is a natural reaction to criticize those thought responsible for this apparently inequitable situation.

The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) has told us that soon to be released is the report on what we popularly call the work ethic. If, as he suggests—and I do not have any reason to take issue with his statement—the general attitude of Canadians toward productivity is very healthy, then as a logical sequence he will have to find more efficient ways to get the unemployed into the job vacancies. With regard to the public service, the criticisms arise from publicity that has been given to the number of persons in the service. I had correspondence with the previous president of the treasury board and he knows I am far from satisfied with the approach that is being taken to establish the level of efficiency in the various departments. I intend to maintain communication with the new President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) to follow closely the progress of the studies under way. Perhaps I should get off on the right foot by saying how pleased I am about the appointment of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice to this important post, and despite the timing I do make my comment most sincerely.

Last evening I had the pleasure to visit the newly redecorated Victoria Memorial Museum. I certainly recommend this display to all visitors to the capital city. This museum building was used by parliament after the great fire that destroyed our previous chambers. It was also in this building that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was elected from Soulanges county in my constituency, suffered a stroke.