

The Address—Mr. McKinnon

and such people are not easily found. He follows a long line of distinguished people who have been squeezed out of the Liberal government in similar circumstances. I think of Mr. Winters, of Miss LaMarsh, of the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), of Mr. Kierans and others, substantiating the claim made by a well-known columnist that in this cabinet only the weak can survive.

I should like to add my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the motion in reply to the address. I was impressed by their sincerity and eloquence. I should also like to compliment the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) on the speech he made in this House yesterday.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKinnon: I found that speech to be most informative and I regret that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) was not present to hear what might prove to be the most knowledgeable speech we shall hear on this subject during the present session.

It is customary on occasions such as this to refer to one's own constituency, to its natural benefits and to its man-made problems. I do not propose to depart too greatly from that custom. I suppose no two constituencies are alike, but I do believe that Victoria is a constituency truly different from the others.

It is particularly gratifying for me to be speaking here this afternoon on the birthday of a former member for Victoria, Sir John A. Macdonald.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKinnon: Victoria, Mr. Speaker, is noted throughout Canada for the beauty of its environment. I suppose this is well known to all hon. members; if it is not, I extend to them an invitation to visit us at their earliest opportunity. We shall be glad to see them and I am sure they will receive the usual Victorian welcome.

I should like to mention one important difference between Victoria and other constituencies, namely, the sociological make-up of its people. Over 30 per cent of the eligible voters are old age pensioners. There were at last count 19,600 residents of the age of 65 or over. These people are in many cases entirely dependent upon the financial arrangements that our society makes for the care of its elderly.

Perhaps the next largest identifiable group in my constituency is that of active government employees. Many of the employees of the defence installations in Esquimalt live in the constituency of Victoria; this group includes both military and civilian employees but again their livelihood depends on the decisions taken in this House. Another sizeable group is made up of those who have retired from the armed services. During their service, most of these men and women, have been posted to and fro across the Dominion, and having once seen Victoria they naturally select it as a place of retirement. Their decision is usually based on a desire to live in a liveable climate and the Victorian way of life. Financially, though, their decision is often hard to support. Victoria, as hon. members will have gathered, operates on a very narrow economic

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base and the retired serviceman in Victoria is almost always under-employed. The three categories I have mentioned are all dependent upon financial arrangements made by the federal government, and I shall have a few words to say about those arrangements later.

In addition to the three groups noted, many Victorians are employed by the provincial governments and by our educational facilities, which are becoming noted for their academic excellence. The University of Victoria has been able to engage some lecturers of international reputation, attracted again, I believe, by our climate and our way of life. Hon. members will note that all the people I have mentioned are employed in the public sector, and in truth this describes Victoria. The private sector of our economy is narrow indeed. We have tourism in the summer, a small and dwindling but efficient ship-building industry, a couple of sawmills. So it can be readily seen that the public sector outweighs the private sector to a greater degree than in almost any other city in Canada, with the possible exception of Ottawa itself.

I should now like to speak about the effects that government action, or inaction, have had on the various segments of the economy of Victoria. In the private sector we suffer from three disadvantages which are difficult to overcome: the extra cost of handling and shipping to and from the mainland; the distances to markets, particularly Canadian markets, and finally our higher labour costs. For these reasons, it is sometimes difficult for us to bid competitively on a dollars and cents basis for federal contracts such as shipbuilding. It is my contention, however, that we are entitled to a reasonable share of such contracts. We pay taxes but we do not believe that paying taxes should be our only type of participation in the federal economy.

In a flatulent press release about a year ago, the government announced that defence contracts were to be allotted henceforth on a zonal basis. To my knowledge there has been no indication of this reasonable concept being put into effect. I should like to point out to the government that Victoria shipyards are second to none in efficiency. Our yards have never burned a ship on the ways; our yards have never subjected a ship to the acid test given the *Restigouche*; our shipyards have never submitted a bill for two and a half times the estimate for a refit.

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The plight of the pensioner is very close to anyone representing Victoria whether on the local, provincial or national level. The federal government has shown itself to be remarkably indifferent to the disastrous effects to inflation on those on fixed incomes.

A rise in the cost of living is immediately reflected in a lowering of the living standards of approximately half my constituents. For those living on the old age pension and supplement only, it means less food or meaner shelter. For those with a fixed income of their own, it means having to give up some things for which they had worked and saved to enjoy in their old age. They feel tricked and cheated by society and that is what your inflationary policies do to them. I could go on but hope to have another opportunity to speak on what I would consider to be an equitable basic old age pension. I have accordingly placed