

*The Address—Mr. Thacker*

ancestors wanted a better life for us—a chance of opportunity and freedom to work, save, and raise a family. For example, we have a large Mormon community which was viciously persecuted in the United States and who brought to Lethbridge-Foothills their unique skills of irrigation and strong family and church ties. We have a large group of Mennonite people who also came to escape religious persecution. To them we look for and receive humanity and charity which is unparalleled. Their reaction to the “boat people” crisis is so typical.

We have a large Hutterite community that choose to farm communally and to look after their own people. Different they are, but they are very valuable to our farm community. We have a large community of citizens from The Netherlands. They bring skills to farming and trades which have permitted the whole area to grow and become prosperous. They too bring a deep belief in family life. We have Italian, Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Scottish, Irish, Japanese, Chinese and all other communities. All are proud of their own identity, but are subject to the Romeo and Juliet syndrome with the result that we are all becoming much more closely related. We have about 6,000 Blood Band Indians living on the largest Indian reserve in Canada. They are on the verge of a cultural and economic flowering that will grow geometrically over the next generations. They are educating their young, and are positive about their role and identity in Canada.

I could talk on for hours about my constituents and riding, but suffice it to say that we are a serious people, dedicated, hard working, confident, and deeply religious. We are still close to the soil and, therefore, the heartbeat of nature, with its tone of rugged independence. We are in Canada because it was a land of opportunity and hope. It still can be if we, as members, do our job well.

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There are many topics I would like to speak about. I would like to tell the House of the devastating effect the capital gains tax is having on our farmers and small businessmen. I would like to speak on the belief honestly held by most people that Parliament does not respond to their wishes. Daily I hear from and read about citizens who are aggrieved, upset and angry about metric conversion, gun control, abortion, and capital punishment. Parliament must respond, and I am delighted with the government's plan to reorganize Parliament so that private members' bills shall come to a vote. I will speak on each one as it arises. Today, though, I want to speak briefly on three major topics—Quebec, Ontario, and our philosophy of government.

With respect to Quebec I can say that the vast majority of my constituents hold warm feelings of real friendship toward the people of that province. We are excited that they have broken out of the mold which restricted and blocked their cultural and economic development. We are delighted with their enthusiasm for life, language, and culture. We know they group us in the west together with all other Anglophones, but I want to say frankly and plainly that the people of my riding

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are as different from the people of Ontario as are the people of Quebec.

We believe the people of Quebec can grow and develop within Canada just as we can in Alberta. We are proud of that aspect of our life which is Canadian—the strong areas helping the weak in this generation because the situation might be reversed in the next generation. We are proud of our record as peacekeepers, of our reputation as a food basket for so much of the world, as a home for refugees, a country where diversity is valued, where changes are made through political evolution rather than revolution. At the same time we are proud of our unique Alberta experience—of our openness, our belief in the value of education, our diverse cultural and ethnic groupings, our fundamental belief in religion, family, and individual initiative. We want the people of Quebec to share the joys and tears of being Canadian while at the same time retaining their provincial uniqueness.

On one issue we in the west are united. We do not accept the concept of sovereignty association if by “sovereignty” the PQ government means total independence, as if it were a separate country, and if by “association” it means retention of equalization and high tariffs. We in the west feel we have contributed much to Canada through selling our raw products to the east at cheap world prices while buying eastern manufactured goods at tariff-protected prices. We need and want, and, indeed, all we ask is a commitment to the Canadian experiment which can continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of future generations.

If I might be permitted a completely personal view, I am convinced that the prime minister of Quebec and his party are still reacting to pressures and injustices of 25 years ago when they were young. But those pressures and injustices have largely disappeared and those which remain can be completely resolved by open, frank, and friendly discussion with the federal government and the governments of the other provinces. Clearly, we have more in common than we have in difference. Mr. Speaker, from the depths of our hearts we want the people of Quebec to willingly and enthusiastically remain in Canada.

With respect to Ontario, Alberta is most upset with the stance of that province vis-à-vis our oil resources. Alberta has produced approximately 11 billion barrels of conventional crude and has only six billion barrels left. We need the world price for this oil so as to finance our ideas and dreams for the future. We believe that in the past, confederation and federal policies have largely been shaped to pour wealth and strength into Ontario. This was no doubt a correct policy for its time and place, but we are now ready, willing and able to contribute more to Canada than raw resources.

As I said earlier, people in the west are as different from the people of Ontario as are the people of Quebec. We have a different background. We are multicultural in our attitude. We have been tested by pioneering a new land and outliving the depression, and have met the test. Members need only read the history of the depression in the west where three out of every four farmers had to give up and leave the land. There