

*The Address—Mr. Thorkelson*

believe we will have our first election for a senator next fall during the civic elections. I encourage the Premier of Alberta to go forward with a plan to elect a nominee and submit a list with that nominee, the second runner-up and the third runner-up, to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Harb:** I want to congratulate the new Member on his speech. We have much in common. We are both interested in research and development. I appreciate it when the Hon. Member says we should be working together in order to improve in this area. The idea of a task force in Edmonton is a great one, and I hope the Government will get the signal from what is happening in Edmonton and start task forces all across the nation. I believe many of the solutions are in the hands of the communities. The communities know what needs to be done. They need tools provided by the Government. They need incentives and assistance programs.

I was involved with the research and development industry for a number of years. We have companies we can be proud of, Northern Telecom and others. This industry is penetrating the Japanese market like never before. It is prospering in the North American and European markets. Assistance in that field would be appreciated. The Hon. Member through his caucus and committee work should push the Government to invest more in research and development.

I am in total agreement with the Hon. Member that we have to save VIA Rail. We must work collectively to save VIA Rail. It is a reflection of what Canada is all about. It is the link that connects the east and west. It is a symbol of Canadian unity. It is a part of Canadian heritage.

My question to the Hon. Member is, how will you pressure the Government to save VIA Rail?

**Mr. Thorkelson:** I have indicated my support for VIA Rail. It was the railway that built the west. It continues to play a very important role in western Canada, moving goods in and out of western Canada.

The Edmonton-Jasper-Vancouver run is very important. Many Japanese tourists come into Edmonton. They take the train overnight through the Rockies. VIA Rail is very important to tourism.

I have discussed my support for VIA Rail with my caucus colleagues and discussions are ongoing. However, we must wait and analyse the global impact of other programs. We must be efficient.

With respect to science and technology, I thank you for your comments. I will direct them to our caucus. Our caucus has been supportive and pro-active in putting together a task force. We hope we can come to a consensus of where we should specialize in science and technology in Edmonton. In Alberta we have a resource base. We want to add knowledge and value to that. We need to examine the whole question. When we do that, I will report the findings of this task force to the House.

**Mr. Harvey** (Edmonton East): The Hon. Member mentioned the matter of deficit reduction. One of the banner programs the Government is contemplating is the imposition of a new national super sales tax estimated to generate between \$8 billion and \$10 billion in new revenue each year. That is approximately \$1,000 a year for the average Canadian family.

The National Council on Welfare has informed us that for a family earning \$100,000 a year, the sales taxes currently in place in Canada will gobble up approximately 4 per cent of that family's annual income. If they are earning \$40,000 a year, sales taxes will take better than 6 per cent of their income. If they are struggling and trying to manage on \$10,000 a year, that family will pay approximately 11.5 per cent of its income in sales taxes.

The Conservative Government of the Province of Alberta is implacably opposed to the imposition of this new national sales tax, as has been stated by Premier Getty, Alberta's Treasurer, Mr. Johnston, and by the New Democratic Party in Alberta. I will not pretend to speak for the Liberal Party in Alberta. They seem to have trouble determining that themselves.

• (1630)

Given all of this, given the nearly unanimous opposition to the creation of an at-the-till sales tax in Alberta for the first time, will the Hon. Member oppose the tax in this House?

**Mr. Thorkelson:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his five-minute question on the sales tax issue. The Hon. Member should know that when the sales tax, business transfer tax or value added tax is finally implemented, the 3 per cent surcharge on our taxes will come off. There will be tax credits for low-income Canadians.