

The Address—Mr. Brisco

be aware that not for months but for years the editors of the national newspapers have demonstrated their verbal indignation over the inaction of the federal government and its failure to take a positive and constructive stand on the number one issue facing this nation.

I honestly wonder how the Prime Minister can now summon the courage to face this house if he knows that the United States president has, in 60 days, set out to accomplish what the present government has not had the intestinal fortitude to attempt in nine years. Of course spending is necessary, but the point is how, where, when and on what. Certainly the government has not suffered from any largesse to Kootenay West. There has been none.

When, in 1968, a flood disaster struck the city of Trail and caused millions of dollars damage to its downtown business area and to the homes of many residents, the government was not moved to assist in any meaningful way. Its attention and our dollars went to such things as refitting and then scrapping HMCS "*Misadventure*".

I fail to note in the Speech from the Throne much reference to Bill 22, recently adopted in Quebec. When the Prime Minister addressed this House on September 15, 1968, he said in part that English speaking Canadians must not allow a single incident to cause them to forget the basic principle that linguistic equality requires all provinces to recognize the right of parents to have their children educated in the official language of their choice.

I agree with what the Prime Minister said in 1968. Obviously he no longer agrees with himself. Since he seems somewhat vague on the subject of Bill 22, is the Prime Minister suggesting by his silence a similar bill for all provinces?

Again, with reference to the Speech from the Throne, I note the intent of the government to renew the mandate of the Food Prices Review Board. I take it that this is a form of dentistry wherein the government will reline the gums but forget about the dentures. That is about all the dignity this mandate deserves.

On the positive side I am pleased to see the government adopting policies from my party, policies that were clearly spelled out by the Conservatives in the recent campaign. I refer to increases in pensions, war veterans' allowances—although the government has failed to say how large these will be—and in allowances for spouses aged between 60 and 65 of old age security recipients. The latter policy is a modified version of our party's avowed policy.

I am pleased to note that the government will make special efforts on behalf of individuals and specific groups who are ready and willing to work but tend to experience particular difficulty in finding regular employment. There are perhaps thousands of physically handicapped Canadians who hope the government is making reference to them. This also applies to many of our unskilled native peoples.

All Canadians are awaiting with interest the development of the government's new transportation policies. Certainly in Kootenay West we are interested. There is an early need for a municipal airport at Creston and Kaslo, and the extension of an existing runway at Nelson. We are pleased that the government is currently upgrading and

[Mr. Brisco.]

paving the Trail municipal airport at Columbia Gardens. We have been fighting for this airport improvement for 20 years.

The people, business and industry of Kootenay West are also interested in the government's rail policy. As the government has said, "Transportation is vital to Canada, providing for the flow of people and goods that link and bind our regions".

Under existing policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway, rail, truck transport and telecommunication links are being steadily severed. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) and the minister responsible for regional economic development have heard or will shortly hear from me on this subject. It seems more than passing strange that an area such as Kootenay West, an area with an unfavourable economy, an area that qualifies for assistance under the DREE program, should suffer from rail line abandonment and diminished truck transport service at the hands of one company.

The government attitude toward environmental concerns is amply demonstrated by the six lines of vague rhetoric it devotes to the subject in the Speech from the Throne. Surely the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauv ) is deserving of more attention. My specific concern and the concern of all Canadians, especially those on the Pacific coast, is the do-nothing attitude of the government toward the tanker route from Alaska to Cherry Point, Washington.

The hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp) did this country a disservice by saying from the beginning that the government would do something, because the government did nothing. Surely the demand for a double bottom on these oil tankers is not too much to insist upon. Indeed, it is the least the government should insist upon. I note that the government, according to the Speech from the Throne, has initiated a series of consultations with the principal groups in our society, including provincial governments. I note that the government will ask these groups how productivity can be increased. That is a wonderful idea. I urge the government to address the question of productivity improvement directly to the Minister of Mines for British Columbia.

The various taxes, supertaxes and royalties and other controls now in effect, or going into effect in British Columbia, have sharply reduced risk capital in B.C. mining ventures, and mining companies have virtually abandoned the province in the exploration for new mines. I urge the Minister of Finance to study seriously the economic effects of raw resources taxation introduced by some provinces before he even gives thought to additional and heavy federal taxation that would disallow provincial mining taxes from being deducted before federal taxes are calculated. Surely the mining industry will stagger under the load. Is this the productivity the government seeks to encourage?

As a new member of parliament it has been my privilege to observe the exchanges of question and debate for the first time. I have been depressed by the fact that some ministers of the government show little or no concern for the questions, and are flippant in their replies.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Do not be surprised.