

The Address—Mr. J. P. Guay

cars would not accommodate or improve that situation. The fact is that the car order process is very fully booked for quite a period forward, so some decision in the near future is adequate. We will be making that decision before very long.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Monday, March 4, consideration of the motion of Mr. Stollery for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 31).

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, at ten o'clock last night I was in the midst of congratulating the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on having called the first Western Economic Opportunities Conference which was held at Calgary. I was also saying that many more such conferences will be needed. However, this first conference demonstrated to the citizens of western Canada that this government—I am not speaking, as I said, necessarily in partisan terms—is sensitive to the concerns of western Canadians. This initiative must continue. It must be followed by others. As a result of the conference a number of proposals were put forward. These will go a long way toward rectifying some of the problems faced by western Canadians. I refer particularly to transportation policies. Once these proposals are implemented they will be of benefit to consumers, businesses and farmers in western Canada.

We must help those in the grain business, those in the lumber trade and those in the fruit industry. While it is true that farmers in western Canada now receive the highest prices for their production, this does not necessarily mean that they are receiving the highest return on their production because they are now paying the highest prices ever for farm machinery, labour, maintenance, fertilizers and even twine and the like. Then there is the additional burden of having to finance these purchases.

There is also a curious factor involved which I must bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker. Farmers living in western Canada close to the oil industry are paying the fantastic increases in the prices of oil and gas. They are paying the same percentage increase that is paid by Canadians living elsewhere. Many people believe that western Canadians somehow are ripping off Canadians in other areas, but that is not true. There are western Canadians who feel they should pay less for gas and oil products because they are close to the source. They feel this way because for a long time they have had to pay more than Canadians elsewhere for manufactured products such as automobiles, television sets and the like.

It has been suggested that western Canadians wish to blackmail the rest of Canada by charging more to others for their oil and gas. If this is the case it must be because

[Mr. Lang.]

they in turn have been exploited by others for too long in other areas. I do not believe it is blackmail. I believe western Canadians are trying to point out that they will agree to sell their natural resources at the same price to all Canadians only when the rest of Canada return the favour. That is not exploitation. When the people of the west are treated equally in regard to consumer products with Canadians living in eastern Canada, then they will reciprocate.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne referred to additional measures in favour of women. I am very glad about this initiative and I hope that there will be many more women in this House in the future. I am happy to see also that we shall be doing something to abolish certain practices which are contrary to the aspirations of half of our population.

I must admit that I may be a little old to speak about these issues, but I am aware of the deep changes which are occurring in our constantly developing society.

I think that it may be up to the next generation to understand the effects and objectives of this movement, but I am optimistic about the future. This is quite a challenge for those who will replace us. The recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada must continue to be studied seriously.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to emphasize one point, that is that we shall have to operate without party considerations once more in western Canada. As for me, I am ready to work in co-operation with all hon. members to implement the initiatives mentioned in this Speech from the Throne.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the Member of Parliament for St. Boniface wishes to assure all members that his position in favour of western Canada and his desire to promote western Canada are not intended to weaken Canada or to seek special advantages or privileges for this vast region of our country. Let me as a westerner by birth say sincerely that I have always been excited by the potential of western Canada. The people of the prairies and those from the Pacific coast want other Canadians to share in the great future of the west and the far west. We are not separatists; we are not un-Canadian; we are not blackmailers. We are concerned Canadians who have been forced to speak a little louder sometimes because others have not listened to us. My plea to all in this House is that they listen to the west. To listen is to learn. To learn is to understand, and to understand is to be prepared to act.

I believe I have said enough, Mr. Speaker. I hope we will receive the co-operation of the loyal opposition in implementing the policies in the throne speech.

● (1210)

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for recognizing me and allowing me to take part in this most significant debate. Before I continue may I extend my sincerest congratulations to the new Governor General and Her Excellency as they embark on fulfilling this very important and significant post in Canada.