

The Address—Mr. Chretien

I have mentioned labour-management co-operation because I believe this is a field in which the maximum degree of effort is required at the present time. It is a field where such efforts will yield the greatest possible results, because management has a direct and positive interest in increasing the rate of industrial growth while the labour unions have a direct and personal interest in keeping up the supply of new jobs. This is a task which any government must set itself in moving to correct those built-in disabilities which have helped to introduce unemployment. Government can only accomplish this task by enlisting the support of labour and management in a direct and positive way. I must point out that there is a great deal of good will on both sides, good will which must be placed at the service of the economy and of the people of Canada in general.

At this time I should like to say to the new Minister of Labour that he is indeed fortunate in the calibre of those people he will find at his disposal in the Department of Labour and the unemployment insurance commission, people who have been, are, and, I am sure, will be ready and willing to carry forward the policies he may be initiating.

I have mentioned these matters at some length because I believe they are the real problems and issues which must be kept in mind when we examine the outline of government policy as it appears in the speech from the throne. It is not my intention to pull this document apart, sentence by sentence and word by word. However, there are some general remarks which I feel called upon to make at this time. While giving the government the benefit of the doubt, as we are all inclined to do, nevertheless I am forced to point out that there is very little for labour in the speech from the throne. Some of the promises which have been made by the present occupants of the treasury benches, including the Prime Minister, come to mind. I think of the measure to introduce a minimum wage of \$1.25, the regulation of hours of work and a number of other things. I have scanned the speech from the throne thoroughly and have yet to find anything in it directed toward labour in this country. There is one sentence relating to automation and manpower adjustment, but it is not clear what that sentence really means. I would think it refers to a bill similar to the one we introduced in the last parliament, and setting out the same policy that was contained in that measure—one, by the way, which failed to pass.

What about the proposal to set up a new department of industry? Will the new minister be able to give direction to industry?

Is that what is intended? If so, where does direction stop and regimentation begin? We should like to hear about this when the legislation setting up the new department is introduced. If the department is not going to give direction, what will be its function? We shall all be awaiting with interest the answers to these questions.

Also to be found in the speech is mention of an economic council to develop more employment and encourage efficient production. I venture to say that if this council is set up no effects will be felt in this country for at least four or five years. In fact there is nothing in this speech from the throne which would have an immediate effect. This economic council appears to be nothing more than a wrapping up of the national economic development board which we proposed and which was held up by the last parliament along with the measure to establish a productivity council. Hon. gentlemen opposite have thrown these into one basket and come up with this idea of forming an economic council.

I have no objection to this, because the measures we introduced were good measures which would have resulted in a continuation of the economic development already under way as a result of the other programs we implemented. But to try to pass these measures off as part of the bold, imaginative Liberal government program is just a little too much to swallow. I think hon. members opposite have perpetrated a hoax on the Canadian people.

They say they are going to set up a municipal loan board. What funds do they propose to make available to that board for loans? Is it \$400 million? How much work is that going to provide? The municipal winter works program has seen \$900 million spent in five years, giving jobs every winter to 135,000 Canadians for a period of 45 days. Yet hon. members opposite talk about solving the unemployment problem with \$400 million. How is this money to be distributed? What criteria will be applied in granting loans to some municipalities and refusing them to others? Can any municipality get them? Is there to be a limit, or will Toronto and Montreal or some other large municipalities get all the money, leaving nothing for the others?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

(Translation):

Mr. Jean Chretien (St. Maurice-Lafleche): Mr. Speaker, as a new member in this house, allow me to offer you my most sincere congratulations on your appointment as Speaker of the house. I am sure that you will dis-