

The Budget—Mr. Oberle

part of British Columbia, it is quite an experience for me to travel to the nation's capital and en route to visit some of the great cities of our country, cities into which we have plans to herd 85 per cent of our population by 1980. What an insult to the intelligence of the human race!

It is unbelievable to me that anyone in their right mind would pursue such disastrous policies when the rest of our vast land beckons to be challenged. Am I really to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people who have been born into the concrete jungles of our nation are suddenly about to creep out of the dim and the glare, out of the smog and the smoke, and embark on the development of the north? Are they really serious about the development of one of the world's last frontiers in a way no other region has ever been developed? Are they really serious when they say that the development of the northern resources must be carried out in harmony with the protection of the environment?

Are they really considering that there is a breed of people in northern Canada now which can be compared with the early settlers and pioneers, the only difference being that they are fighting against much greater odds because so-called civilization is much closer to them? Are they considering the native people who have lived there for centuries and are still there? Mr. Speaker, they had better consider all those things. They had better have a convincing story because the people in the north will not stand for any more blunders. They had better have the answers to some vital questions. For whom are they developing and exploiting the north? What benefits will be derived by the people there? Who will pay for the social structure, the services, the transportation network?

Parts of my constituency have been subjected to an ambitious development program. The city of Prince George is one of Canada's fastest growing centres but there is no plan for any of the infrastructure to which I have referred. There are not nearly enough facilities for our young people. Our old age pensioners—people who have lived there for the major part of their lives—are shipped out to strange places 300 to 400 miles away because they have become chronically ill. A new hospital under construction will be 105 per cent occupied if and when it is ever finished. We have to fight for, beg and steal every penny we spend on post-secondary education and our facilities are hopelessly inadequate. After 20 years of struggle we finally witnessed the construction of an air terminal which would adequately serve a city half the size of Prince George. Nobody has yet determined who, and to what extent the three levels of government are responsible for urban renewal, for transportation and road networks, because everybody passes the buck.

The village of McBride, with its surrounding area of 3,500 people, does not have television and the latest estimate holds out hope for TV three years from now. What a barbaric approach to the development of that region which we have learned to know as mid-Canada. Are we going to repeat this disaster as we embark upon the development of the north? Yet with a new and imaginative development strategy the north could well be the answer to a lot of pressing problems. But the policy would have to be worked out by human beings, not computers.

[Mr. Oberle.]

Mr. Speaker, before we commit ourselves to any more northern development we must look at all these things. We must learn from all the mistakes already made. Most of all, we must assure ourselves of a government prepared to accept the challenge, a government convinced and strong. As a government, we must say no to foreign corporations who are blindly pursuing policies of exploitation. We must also say no to international unions which are acting irresponsibly in our country by depriving our labour force of shaping their own destiny.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired.

Mr. William Rompkey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise as a member of this House on the first occasion and it is a particular pleasure to take part in the budget debate. I want to say to you, Sir, I am very pleased to be here at this time as the member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador. May I also take this opportunity of saying to you and to those who occupy that chair how impressed I have been with the impartiality and fairness with which you conduct yourselves.

I want to tell the House something about my riding. I will try to relate my remarks to the budget speech because certain aspects of the budget have very wide implications for my riding.

• (1550)

This is one of the largest ridings in Canada, encompassing an area of about 130,000 square miles including a great part of the island of Newfoundland and the territory of Labrador of some 112,000 square miles. It is a widespread riding with diverse and divergent social and economic problems ranging from the problems of the woods industry in central Newfoundland through the beautiful Green Bay area with its great tourist potential, through the area of White Bay which is primarily concerned with the fishing industry, to the whole territory of Labrador.

This area has been called the last great storehouse of natural wealth, but even in Labrador there are great contradictions. On the coast are the small isolated communities sometimes ranging from two or three families in the summer months to communities of 1,000 people. In the central part of Labrador we have the communities of Hamilton Inlet, Goose Bay—which is now undergoing a transitional stage—and in the west one of the greatest hydroelectric developments in the world at Churchill Falls. Farther west there are the great iron mines of Labrador City and Wabush.

It is a land of contrasts. There, too, we have the Indian and Eskimo communities. These people are desperately trying to adapt themselves to the twentieth century. If we think we are having cultural problems in adapting to the rapid pace of technology, these people are suffering even more so in that regard. These changes baffle all of us who are Canadians whether we live in small villages or large cities. So, in a way, this riding is a microcosm of Canada with problems of regional disparity, problems of great distances to be spanned, problems of communication