

The Address—Mr. Friesen

responsibilities as such, I am convinced that she will set up policies and standards so that the programs meet today's needs and may be revamped with increased financing if possible.

Mr. Dupras: I would like to put a second question to my colleague from Shefford (Mr. Lapierre). In view of the disenchantment which is felt now by the students, at least in the Province of Quebec, about the administration of the grants program, I wonder if this would not be a good opportunity for a new ministry to deal with this question which is so important for the Quebec student, and perhaps put under the federal jurisdiction the administration of the grants programs for the young students of Quebec at the secondary, collegial and university levels should again come under federal jurisdiction.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague has just raised a very important point; there was reference to access to post-secondary education a little earlier, and I must say that the whole question of loans and grants to students has become very important. At the present time, we are aware of their dissatisfaction not only with the administration but also with the criteria, and the major contribution of the Canadian government to that field is very well known.

I know discussions about loans and grants are taking place at the present time. Personally, I would like the situation to be clarified. And if the Canadian government is involved in the program, I wish the money would be given directly to the student, as it is done everywhere else in Canada. For that reason, I think the whole situation should be reviewed because I doubt even 10 per cent of Quebec students are aware the Federal government contributes to their loan and grant program. Moreover, being very likely one of few members still paying back his loan, I can say there are numerous administrative problems right now. I must admit I never received any pamphlet or letter telling me about the Canadian government contribution to our loans and grants. In that regard, when I underlined the need for government information, I did so because I am convinced this is one measure which should be taken. Our duty is clear in that area and if possible we should make the criteria much more just and equitable.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Are there any other questions or comments? Debate. The Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen).

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, I always thought that smuggling in this country was a criminal offence until I heard the Hon. Member for Labelle (Mr. Dupras) ask those questions of the Hon. Member for Schefferville.

An Hon. Member: Shefford.

Mr. Evans: That is a Freudian slip.

Mr. Friesen: The Hon. Member has legalized a profession which has been frowned on everywhere else in the country. But I guess when you are running out of imaginative ideas, that is not a bad twist.

I take pleasure in speaking in this debate on the Speech from the Throne. It is getting to be a rare privilege in this country to be able to speak in reply to a Speech from the Throne. When I first came here nine and a half years ago, the first session lasted two years, and at that time that was a record in the Commonwealth for a Parliament before there was another Speech from the Throne. That, however, was not good enough for the Government. It wanted to establish a new record. I suppose it wants to become the Wayne Gretzky of parliaments and have the longest streak going. This one has been nearly four years long.

● (1710)

As I say, it is becoming a rare privilege to be able to speak in a Throne Speech debate. I say that not entirely in jest because there is a real feeling that the rarity of Throne Speeches is diminishing our opportunities to speak on issues of comprehensive global and international importance. Supposedly a Throne Speech will set before us a blueprint for action by the Government. If the Government follows the blueprint, Canadians have an idea of the direction the Government plans to take. But when there is no blueprint, there is no way of knowing and the Government can, helter-skelter, bring in legislation; willy-nilly it can follow any direction because there is no direction. I think it is a subtle denial of our right to participate in debate over the direction of the country when the Government does not bring forward annually a Throne Speech debate.

I want now to speak to the amendment to the motion before us, Mr. Speaker. It is very emphatic in that it says:

"This House regrets to inform Your Excellency that your ministers have failed to propose measures that would result in lasting and equitable solutions to the hardships imposed by the high level of chronic unemployment that is being experienced in all regions of Canada as a consequence of years of economic mismanagement by your ministers."

Then there is a subamendment which says:

—"and their insistence upon fighting inflation by deliberately throwing hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of work."

I can imagine that Members sitting in the Government benches might think that motion is too severe and sweeping, especially the words "deliberately throwing hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of work". At first blush it might seem to be too extreme because I think all of us recognize that there is an international economic problem and distortion in the economies of almost every country in the world. In my own province of British Columbia there are severe economic problems, the blame for which we would not necessarily and immediately lay at the feet of this Government. There are problems in the lumber industry because the housing industry is down. There are problems in the B.C. coal industry because steel mills in Japan and other countries are shut down. There has been a decline in the demand for B.C. mineral products, and a high inventory of processed salmon because people are