

I fear for my country because I see this government taking this latter course. I do not believe for a moment that the people of Canada are going to be happy with this, because we are a great people, an idealistic people, an altruistic people, and we will not stand idly by when governments and politicians appeal to what is worst in us instead of to what is best in us.

I have just returned from Alberta and Saskatchewan. I have spoken with ordinary Canadians there. The people of the west love this country. They think it is the greatest country in the world. I share that conviction with them.

An hon. Member: So do I.

Mr. McCauley: I am pleased to hear someone else does too. They are not going to take kindly to a government that appeals to what is worst in them. Already they are in revolt. In Prince Albert, the seat formerly held by John Diefenbaker, all signs point to a government defeat. Mr. Diefenbaker was immensely popular in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, but his party is not, and is becoming even less so as each day passes.

● (2040)

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to support this government when it is right. It is my responsibility to be open-minded and fair, and I take that responsibility seriously. But at the same time it is my responsibility, as it is the responsibility of every member of this House, no matter what side he sits on, to speak out forcefully and strongly against policies that pit Canadians against each other on the basis of economic wealth and economic resources.

All of us have a duty to speak out strongly and forcefully against policies that encourage regionalism, that feed the prejudice of separation, that fan the fires of division in this country. All of us, each and every member of Parliament, have a duty to speak out against government policies that reveal a lack of compassion, a lack of understanding, a lack of caring. All of us have a responsibility to speak out strongly against policies that have more to do with some kind of abstract dogma than they have to do with flesh and blood, the hopes and dreams of the ordinary working people of this country. That is the enterprise that we should all be engaged in, Mr. Speaker, and I invite all members of this House to join me in that enterprise, to support what is right, but to speak out strongly and forcefully against what is wrong.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to stand before you tonight as the new member for Lethbridge-Foothills. I believe that the role of a member of parliament is an important role in our Canadian society. As members we have exceptional rights, immunities and privileges. We also have major responsibilities.

Like many other members, I am in public life because I sense that Canada and Canadian people are at a low ebb, at a crisis of identity, at a point where we doubt our own abilities, institutions and future. We are questioning the basic values we hold dear. We are questioning the value of our basic institutions, be it church, government or marriage. We are at a time

in history that can best be described as an interface between the values of past generations and future generations.

I have no doubt whatsoever as to the capacity of Canadians not only to survive this crisis of confidence, but to emerge with renewed vigour and direction. I am convinced that Parliament is the major institution that can focus our collective Canadian consciousness, that can put into place and motion the proper processes to solve our social and economic problems. It is Parliament that can set the tone of public attitudes. Parliament must protect individual rights, private ownership of property, and the fundamental freedoms. It is here in this House over the next few months and years that the role of government, the role of private enterprise, and the role of the individual citizen will be decided. I sincerely hope that we, as individual members, make decisions from the point of view that Canada will last for thousands of years. If we do, the future generations will be able to say we were wise.

Lethbridge-Foothills consists of the southwest corner of Alberta and has a population of about 90,000 people. Its geography varies from the beautiful Rocky Mountains through the foothills and out to the wide prairie. Our commercial enterprises range from tourism in the mountains, together with coal mining, to gas production and ranching in the foothills, to dry land and irrigation farming on the prairies. Located at convenient places throughout the constituency are about 20 communities which act as service centres for the surrounding farmers and ranchers. Agriculture and agricultural processing are our main source of wealth.

In our mountains we have millions of tons of low sulphur coal which is the real solution to the dreaded acid rain currently devastating our lakes in central Canada. Under our prairie, at a depth of 200 to 400 feet, lies a seam of thermal coal about six feet thick which is the long-term solution to Canada's energy supply. We have water for irrigation which is the short and long-term solution to the world's food crisis. In short, we have abundant resources.

The city of Lethbridge has close ties with confederation and its events. In order to build and operate the CPR, a supply of coal was needed. Elliot T. Galt, the son of Sir Alexander Galt, one of the Fathers of Confederation, found that coal at a place called Coal Banks, where Nick Sheran was supplying coal to Fort Macleod and Fort Benton. Coal Banks is now the thriving city of Lethbridge, with 52,000 citizens. It has the Centennial University of Lethbridge which offers a baccalaureate degree in arts, science, and education. Members will recall that Fort Macleod was the first fort established by the North West Mounted Police after a gruelling march westward during the summer of 1874.

What I really want to explain about Lethbridge-Foothills is its people. The people of Lethbridge-Foothills are what makes it great and my job so interesting and worth while. Our people are multicultural, with many organized and active groups throughout the riding. With the exception of our native people who I will mention shortly, we are all immigrants within the last four to five generations. We are in Lethbridge-Foothills either because of active hostility in other lands or because our