

Speech from the Throne

The constitution of Canada gives ownership and control of resources to the provinces. In the last resort, this simple legal fact gives immense power to western Canadian provinces in this time of rising demand for resources. I am confident that the people of western Canada are willing to join with other Canadians in a united, federally-led industrial policy on foreign ownership, resource and manufacturing development as long as this policy meets the legitimate needs of the modern west. Without such guarantees, why should we westerners permit the insensitivity of United States capital to the nature of Canada to be replaced by equally, if not more, insensitive eastern Canadian capital?

Modern Canadian industrial policy must, in short, provide a means of investing Canadian money and technology in western Canada to help us develop employment opportunities for people who live on the Prairies and want to stay on the Prairies, people who live in British Columbia and want to stay there, as well as people who live in the north. Canada must develop transport facilities and assist with freight rates so that western industries can develop our north and sell into foreign markets.

This policy, of course, must not stop at mineral and energy resources. The western farm economy also offers manufacturing opportunities for machinery, meat processing, feed products and fertilizer. We must adjust to the reality of the great distances in this country. Skilled federal civil servants should not all be confined to Ottawa. They should be spread around a bit so that the goods and services can help the prosperity of people all across Canada, the people who are paying for them. National Crown corporations should be headquartered outside of Ottawa. We should start with that. We have had a good indication of the attitude of this government. I say that the pressure should be maintained, not to rob Ottawa of any of its glory, but to see that it does not get any more glory than that to which it is entitled. The rest of us should get a little piece of the action to which we are entitled because we pay for it.

Today the opportunities for a new industrial strategy offer a chance to refute the old point of view that the rest of Canada is a futile backwater for Toronto and Montreal. Needless to say, in this field as in others, the relevance of the Canadian experiment is clear far beyond our borders. In our era, it is indeed timely to demonstrate that different regions as well as different cultures can live united and free, without stifling uniformity and centralized industrial control from head offices located only in the world's largest metropolitan centres.

A national policy for rural Canada appears to be developing that clearly acknowledges the rights of rural citizens to certain guarantees during this period of change that is sweeping the world; the right to participate in determining their future; the right to security in an era of change; the right in the case of older families to continue living with dignity and honour in their traditional communities if they so desire.

The present government, led by the Prime Minister has begun to move in almost all the areas I have examined today. Starting with his first-hand experience of the legitimate aspirations of Quebec, the Prime Minister has learned very quickly that parallels to these same aspirations are to be found in other regions of Canada. I believe

[Mr. Osler.]

he has seen, too, that industrial and service employment must be provided outside our large metropolitan centres if our quality of life is to be improved.

We must all grasp the implications of the new ballgame the world is playing now. The United Kingdom is engrossed with Europe. The United States is trying desperately to adjust to the facts of life that have crowded in on her during the past few years. Canada is on her own in a sense that she has never experienced before. These are challenging and exciting times. If we hold on to our nerve and use wisely all the assets we possess, surely we can enter successfully the contest offered to us by His Excellency in his Speech from the Throne. Let us move forward. He said our challenge is to remove the barriers that create isolation in Canada and the world, to help each Canadian to fulfil his own potential and to ensure that the image of Canada becomes more and more one of compassion and promise.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the Speech from the Throne would indicate that the government at last is prepared to come to grips with the Canadian economy. Unfortunately, that was not the case. It merely included some pious platitudes given to His Excellency to advise us that we have had to deal with some unusually difficult economic problems in the past year. That we already knew, Mr. Speaker. What the Speech from the Throne did not say was that most of the economic problems were directly or indirectly a result of government policy. Also, we were not told that by any objective standard we failed miserably in coping with the situation. If the government's performance were graded with the same objectivity that is expected in the academic world, its grade would be F minus.

Unemployment is now at 7.7 per cent. As hon. members know, in some parts of the country it is much worse than that. In the province of Quebec and in some parts of the Atlantic provinces, the rate is exceptionally and unusually high. It is too high for the economic and human wellbeing of those parts of our great country. It is too high to build the kind of bridge of unity that we want to see in Canada.

At the same time, the rate of inflation is back on a year to year basis at 4.9 per cent. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the inflation level is now higher than when this whole inhumane exercise was begun in 1969. It is not unfair to blame the present mess on the government and its policies. I say policies rather than policy because it is a series of legislative and other policy changes which has brought us to the present sad and chaotic situation.

One of the first and at the same time disastrous errors in judgment was the tight money policy of 1969-70. What did it accomplish? It put a few hundred thousand people out of work unnecessarily. These people have been denied the right which should be theirs in an industrialized and supposedly civilized society to contribute to that society in a meaningful way. They are deprived of one of the most important human needs, the necessity to be useful, to be part of the show. This is an intolerable situation for everyone who is denied the right to participate, but particularly for the young people. They are highly educated, very idealistic and determined to build a better, more just society. They are denied the chance to become involved.