

The Address—Mr. Gillespie

the Victoria Charter had been accepted, as it was by Liberal, Conservative and NDP governments, and had come into effect, Saskatchewan and Manitoba would have been eternally second class provinces because they would never have sufficient population to equal 50 per cent of the total of the four western provinces. In other words, they would have to take whatever was given to them. I never fail to express my thanks and appreciation to Premier Bourassa for what he did to put an end to the Victoria Charter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Now, I shall say a word on the subject of freight rates. They are destroying us. I have listened to the Minister of Justice on this subject. At the end of the war we were discriminated against to the extent of about 15 per cent. There have been increases regularly—horizontal ones—since then. The result is that today the discrimination against western Canada amounts to some 45 per cent. I, therefore, suggest that one of the first things which should be done should be to pass legislation in parliament to roll back, for a period of five years, the general rate structure so that the present discrimination which prevents the kind of industrialization which the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion endeavoured to bring about could be achieved in larger measure in western Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad to see reformation, even if it comes awfully late, because deathbed repentance does secure salvation in Heaven. I am glad to see that the winter works program, which was ditched, has been brought back. We brought it in. And I should like to see the Roads to Resources program, which my government undertook, restored.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I speak, now, for myself on the subject of multi-culturalism. The hon. Minister of State (Mr. Haidasz) is a bit tough. The sum of \$91 million is being spent this year on bilingualism and \$3 million on multi-culturalism.

Mr. Paproski: Shame!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I think the first thing that should be done is to endeavour to restore the ethnic language press in this country which was practically wiped out of existence in consequence of the higher postal rates which came into effect several years ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I know the problem of government. Ministers carry a terrific load. As for the office of Prime Minister, no one who has not occupied that position has any idea of the burden it entails. It takes away that freedom and those holidays which ordinarily one would enjoy.

The subject of inflation was mentioned by my hon. friend from—

An hon. Member: Prince Edward-Hastings.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Two years ago the Prime Minister announced with the greatest of glee that inflation had been licked. Since then, of course, the new Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), who was formerly Minister of National Health and Welfare, said there was going to be higher taxation which would hit the middle classes harder. He did not get any good marks for that from the Prime Minister. But that has been the course—soak the middle classes. I have always been opposed to unnecessary government interference with the operations of the free market. I believe today, on the basis of the experience of the United States, that there should be brought into effect immediately price and wage controls so as to meet the problem of inflation which is today worsening at a rate almost beyond comprehension.

• (1550)

Sir, I shall conclude now and thank all members of the House for the courtesy they have shown me in remaining here through a rather lengthy speech, and for the fact that they permitted me to speak beyond the 30 minutes.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I should like to start by extending my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of this House. Your eloquent turn of phrase, your wit, your patience and your wisdom are well known to us. These are qualities which are known here and well beyond the four corners of this House. I should like also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Deputy Speaker, a man who has a distinguished parliamentary career, a man who I know will serve us well. I suppose really one might put it in these terms: as a House we are to be congratulated on our good fortune. I should like to also take this opportunity to congratulate the mover, the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais), and the seconder, the hon. member for Lachine (Mr. Blaker), for their eloquent statements in leading off this debate. I know their constituents will be proud to learn of the fine progress they have made and the early recognition they have gained from this House for their abilities.

I have listened to most of the speeches made by hon. members and have read some others. I have been impressed by the quality and the seriousness of the speeches. I have been impressed also by the good will and I think the good sense already displayed by this twenty-ninth parliament. For this is a crucial parliament. The pace of events outside these hallowed halls will not wait for us. The particular perspective—and I should like to emphasize this this afternoon—is that as an industrialized nation, as a nation depending quite uniquely on foreign trade and our ability to compete in international markets for our standard of living, nothing could be more damaging than if we were to become the victims of bickering and petty politics, if we were to become preoccupied in an inward-looking way while the rest of the industrialized world went about pursuing its interests and maximizing its competitive position. This would be complacency in default. This would be a mistake of monumental propor-