

*The Address—Mr. Nystrom*

We, as Members of Parliament, must listen to the views expressed by those who elected us. After all, it is we who have permitted these conditions to occur and to continue. Governments are supposed to look after the affairs of the nation, and responsibility must therefore rest upon us. Moreover, those of us who are Members of Parliament have accepted, over the years, the conditions I have described, many of us in a smug and complacent way. Many of us have sat here using beautiful rhetoric but doing nothing to change fundamentally the society in which we live. We talk of justice, we talk of freedom, we talk of liberty.

In the Speech from the Throne there is a passage which reads: "A society which is not inspired by love and compassion is not worthy of that name." Mr. Speaker, have you ever tried to tell the unemployed or the poor people of this country that the present government is inspired by love and compassion? A number of changes have, indeed, been made. Minor reforms have been carried out. The Criminal Code has been amended; Parliament has passed the official languages legislation which will bring equal opportunity to many more Canadians. The Speech from the Throne announces the intention to set up a department of urban affairs and housing, something which my party has been urging for a long time. I hope this new department can be given real muscle. Recognition has finally been accorded to the government in Peking as the government of China. These are all positive steps and I welcome them, but they represent only minor reforms and the people cannot be fooled into believing the government is doing all it can to meet the serious challenges of our time. It seems to me the government believes in perpetuating the status quo, that it believes in perpetuating a system under which important decisions are made in the boardrooms of corporations motivated by a desire for more and more profit.

What Canada really needs is drastic, fundamental change. We should seek to build a country in which the people not only own but control their own society. This implies a redistribution of power, a redistribution of wealth and services in order that everyone, regardless of economic background or social circumstances may have equal access to the benefits of the society in which he lives. I do not think a change of this nature will be welcomed by many of those in positions of power today in Canada.

Nevertheless, we must democratize our society and this means more than holding elections every three or four years. The people must be brought more intimately in touch with decision-making affecting their own lives. It would be easier to do this if so much of our country were not controlled by foreign interests—mainly, of course, by United States interests. Almost two-thirds of the Canadian economy is foreign-owned. Some industries such as the oil refining industries are owned and controlled up to 99 per cent by foreign interests. What does this mean to the ordinary people of Canada? It means, first of all, that Canada is basically a political satellite, that we cannot make all the decisions we want to make. Second, it means we cannot control inflation nor provide adequate

employment for our people. As long as we remain a branch plant economy we cannot build up secondary industry to the extent needed to constitute a viable economy of our own. Today, Canada is an exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. In a situation such as this, full employment is difficult to achieve. Everyone knows there are many more jobs available in manufacturing industries than in resource industries.

Our branch plant economy puts us at the mercy of multinational corporations whose decisions are made in another country. An example of this is the potash industry. This industry, which owns a mine in Saskatchewan and another in New Mexico, had to cut down on production. They cut down to 40 per cent capacity in Saskatchewan while the mine in the United States went on producing at about 90 per cent capacity. As a result of this, Canadians on the Prairies were put out of work.

● (5:30 p.m.)

I suggest, too, that the type of economy we have is not efficient. Each and every year more money goes out of the country in the form of profits and dividends than comes into the country in the form of investment. This is one reason why we must make control of our own economy one of the priority issues facing this Parliament in the next few years. We must regain control of Canada for Canadians. I do not think we can blame the Americans or United States corporations for this state of affairs; it is only natural that they should act in this manner. We have no one to blame but ourselves. We are the only country in the western world with an open-door policy toward our neighbours. We say to them, "Come in and develop our resources, take all you want, take your profits and go home."

This is a situation that we cannot tolerate, one that we will have to change immediately. We can regain control of our economy. Our party, editorials in different magazines, periodicals and newspapers have articulated several ways in which we can regain control of our economy. I am not going to go into those ways here. Members of this party commend the government for the action it has taken in the broadcasting field whereby, as the result of recent regulations, within about one year 80 per cent of Canadian broadcasting will be Canadian-owned. This can also be done with other industries. But we must do more than just talk about it; what we need is real action. I suggest that we have to repatriate the Canadian economy before we can really talk about solving regional disparity, inflation and having full employment in Canada.

There are a number of other matters I should like to touch upon before I sit down. One of them is the reference in the Throne Speech to possible legislation in the area of income and income security. I should like to press the government during this particular session to introduce a bill to implement a guaranteed annual income for Canadians. This is one of the most effective ways, perhaps the only way, to start a real fight against poverty in Canada. The type of social system we now have perpetuates poverty and does not encourage people

[Mr. Nystrom.]