

*The Address—Mr. Andre*

The hon. member could have added to his list of points, more direct incentives for Canadians to invest in the manufacturing sector. As it is now, there are very few investors, if any, who are interested in pursuing investment in this area. Something direct has to be done by way of tax incentives. Something must be done to improve the labour relations atmosphere in the country. Investors are faced with conflicting opportunities for investment in capital-intensive industries or labour-intensive industries. They opt for the capital more often than not, even with a lesser return, in order not to put up with the hassle which comes with trying to manage a labour-intensive business in today's atmosphere.

Also, something which should be an aspect of industrial strategy is simply to reduce the burden of paperwork and bureaucratic hassle which falls upon the industrial community. Several years ago the *Financial Post* carried out a survey of Canadian industrial leaders and came to the conclusion that something like 35 per cent of executive time in Canadian business was spent dealing with government-initiated requests, and so on. That represents a tremendous waste of high-priced talent and a tremendous cost of doing business. Also, it is a tremendous disincentive to industrial activity. It should be removed.

Before getting on to major area that I wanted to speak about, I compliment the hon. member on his address. His eight-point program could be augmented by the three or four points which I have mentioned. I might re-emphasize that it is not this chamber which needs the education, so much as his own colleagues within the Liberal government, since they have been promising an industrial strategy for many years and they seem to bring it out only at election time and when they need that sort of support.

● (1622)

This is the fifth throne speech I have listened to since my election in 1972, and it is the first one I have heard delivered by the monarch. With due respect to Her Majesty, let me say that it was the most fatuous of the five throne speeches I have heard. Her Majesty—and I am sure she is too gracious a lady to ever admit it—must have been a little puzzled at having been brought all this distance to read that empty speech. I am sure the people of Canada expected a little more. Douglas Fisher, in a column in the *Toronto Sun* issue of Wednesday, October 19, described it as follows:

Throne speech a giant yawn of banal observations.

He went on to say:

In 20 years of scanning federal speeches from the throne, I can't remember one that matches this year's in slowness of content or in the flood of banal observations; 3,600 words in 49 paragraphs which we all will mercifully forget tomorrow.

Ronald Anderson, writing in the *Globe and Mail* issue of Thursday, October 20, describes the throne speech as follows:

As an agenda for action, however, the speech is more than customarily deficient. It deals almost exclusively in broad generalities and pious hopes. The government has used the speech from the throne as a means for giving itself a royal pat on the back, rather than as a vehicle for outlining the way in which it proposes to

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deal with the problems facing the country. The elegant prose fails to conceal the muddled thinking and the policy vacuum that exists in Ottawa.

These are some of the things that have been said. Traditionally, the throne speech is the opportunity and the occasion upon which the government, Her Majesty's ministers, outline to the House of Commons the government's intentions for the coming session. It declares what it has in mind by way of legislation, its program of action for the coming year. Given the thrashing that a lot of our traditions have suffered under this government, it is not surprising to see this tradition of the throne speech disappear and to see us end up with the throne speech of this year which, as Douglas Fisher described it, was full of banal generalities, and a giant yawn.

There are two possible explanations for this dull, bland and banal throne speech. The first is that we have a tired, worn-out, weak government which has no plan of action and which had nothing that it could put into the throne speech by way of a program. In this case, those who subscribe to this view, I presume, would include the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), who described this as the worst cabinet in 30 years. Certainly, I think the evidence would indicate that this explanation is most likely. However, let me say in fairness that there is a second possibility. That is the explanation given by the Liberal apologists who state that the Machiavellian gurus in the bowels of the PMO and the PCO decided that they did not want to waste the publicity that comes from giving the good stuff to Her Majesty, and will save the meat for the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers, so as to maximize the public exposure and publicity that comes from it.

Anyone who sat here, or dozed through the Prime Minister's speech yesterday realized that that theory does not stand up to close examination, because the speech of the Prime Minister was easily as banal and fatuous as was the throne speech the day before. In fact, in terms of new initiatives being announced, there were only two possible items of news within the Prime Minister's very lengthy speech: one which was stolen, as the Prime Minister admitted, from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien), which dealt with an additional \$150 million for job creation—I expect we will get a rerun of that tonight—and the second which dealt with the proposed referendum. As was clearly indicated in the question period this afternoon, that was a last-minute addition which the Prime Minister had not cleared through cabinet, and indeed a previous committee of the cabinet had discarded the idea; but presumably the gurus in the bowels of the PMO, after observing the reaction to the throne speech, thought the Prime Minister had to have something to say, so this was dug up and thrown in.

That is tragic, because the problems which the Prime Minister spoke about in his speech are real. What the country needs now is leadership, not an election lecture. But a lecture is what we got, a long lecture on the problems of the country with no solutions offered whatsoever, no recognition of who caused the problems.

There is a third possible explanation for the banal throne speech, and it also comes from the Liberal apologists. Basic-