

*The Address—Mr. Abbott*

Inflation is now around the 12 per cent mark in Canada, a level calculated to shake any Canadian able to grasp its implications. It is no answer to say, as this government has been saying, that there are countries which did even worse last year. This is true, but most of them cannot be rated serious competitors of ours in world markets. It is equally true that the United States, with which we do 70 per cent of our trade, had a somewhat better inflation record than we did. That is very much more to the point. It hardly needs to be pointed out that our economy is very much less efficient than that of the United States. Trade is vastly more important to us, which means that we can ill afford to allow our prices to rise four times as fast as they need to rise.

We cannot continue, as we have been doing, complacent in the knowledge that inflation is hurting our competitors too. The penalty is all too evident—a lot of lost business, plus a great many lost jobs. We can no longer contend with increasing inflation in our country, inflation which is force-fed by this government whose spending has risen year by year at a faster rate than we can create new wealth. Mr. Speaker, if we continue to expand the public sector and annually boost the expenditure of government at the present rate, both the private sector and the climate for business in Canada will suffer, our wealth-producing capacity will suffer and with it the national standard of living. To think otherwise is to deceive ourselves.

The Economic Council confirmed that spending on social and welfare programs is soaring and must be brought under control before it sinks all of us. Government spending, Mr. Speaker, has been growing close to twice as fast as our gross national product. The figures show that general government spending has been rising at least as fast as transfer payments from government to citizens. The main beneficiary of the welfare state seems to be the government. The injection of more money into a welfare sector never seems to eradicate the welfare sector. The costs, the failures and the dangers will not become less if this government continues to grow faster than we can increase the annual value of the goods and services we produce.

● (1500)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I hope that all of us during this parliament will have the wisdom to base our future policies in Canada on the premise that the more people can do for themselves the better, and the more we can limit the future growth of the government, also the better.

**Mr. A. C. Abbott (Mississauga):** May I first join with other hon. members in offering congratulations to Mr. Speaker and to his deputies. I know they will carry out their difficult task of overseeing this House with the same skill as was shown by their predecessors. I should also like to congratulate the mover (Mr. Duclos) and the seconder (Mr. Lee) of the Address in Reply, new members like myself, who have set a high standard at the beginning of a new parliament.

I am pleased that I can follow in this debate the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp), and that I can offer congratulations to him on his appointment. I should also like to say, as someone who has known him over the years, that I suspect there is no member of this House, with the

[Mr. Mitges.]

possible exception of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), who has rendered more service to this country than the President of the Privy Council.

As a new member it is with feelings of some trepidation and awe that I rise to speak in this Chamber. I suppose it is a feeling known to all who have done so. Anyone with a sense of history must feel somewhat overwhelmed by an appreciation of the great figures who have spoken here, or in the Chamber which preceded this one, or in the British parliament itself. I suggest that no greater honour could fall to any Canadian than of being elected to this House and speaking to fellow members of this Chamber.

I am grateful that the right hon. member for Prince Albert is in his place. There is no one probably, in the history of this parliament—who has added more colour, more drama or more excitement to its proceedings, than has the right hon. gentleman.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Abbott:** Whatever else I may accomplish in this parliament I can at least say that alphabetically I lead the list of all the members since confederation. I do not know how long I can maintain that record.

I represent the constituency of Mississauga. There are some members who are perhaps not overly familiar with this community. Possibly there are some who cannot even spell it.

**An hon. Member:** What about you?

**Mr. Abbott:** I can most certainly spell it, and I can speak of it with enthusiasm because it is already among the major cities of Canada in size and importance, adjoining, as it does, the great metropolitan area of Toronto. There is a disposition on the part of the residents of that great and dynamic metropolitan community to look upon Mississauga as merely a part of that metropolis and to take it for granted.

**An hon. Member:** Shame!

**Mr. Abbott:** Just as we Canadians living on the border with the United States have a feeling sometimes that our own great community is overshadowed by the United States, so do those who live in Mississauga sometimes have a sense of being overshadowed by Toronto. But perhaps I might paraphrase the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and say that if the latter half of the 20th Century belongs to Toronto, the first half of the 21st Century will belong to Mississauga. In any case, the city's rapid growth and its promise of a brilliant future assure it an important place among the metropolitan centres of Canada.

Despite the growth of industry, business and other phases of activity which go to make Mississauga a splendid community, there are certain areas of concern. The vast growth of recent years has created transportation needs which have not yet been dealt with. Many people in the area find it necessary to commute either to Toronto or in a westerly direction, and the transport services are in dire need of improvement. I welcome the initiative which the government proposed to take in this field during the last election, along with the other measures which were