

*The Address—Mr. Axworthy*

wants the benefits to stay in one province and one province only.

The opportunities in western Canada to put that capital to work are enormous. It makes one shudder to think of the way we have allowed that money to sit idle for so many years and to think of what we could be doing to improve our transportation system, to modernize and electrify that whole transportation system in western Canada to move our grain to ports and increase the productivity of our grain resource, which will be here long after oil is gone. Yet we allow huge amounts of capital to sit idle because we are not prepared to work out agreements on proper sharing and distribution.

Mr. Lougheed says he is not interested in a resource bank and not prepared to negotiate such a proposal. We need that kind of capital to ensure that there is an opportunity for other forms of resources in western Canada to grow, prosper and flourish. I refer to hydroelectric power and water irrigation which are designed to upgrade the ability of that part of the country to make its resources work for Canada. However, we are not going to get them by the kind of shilly-shallying we have now. Someone has to take the initiative and speak for the entire country. There must be an assertion of a strong national interest because that is the best solution for westerners.

We often hear that same interesting question many of my colleagues heard in the early sixties when they were asked, "What does Quebec want?" Many eastern Canadians and central Canadians are now asking, "What do western Canadians want?" Unfortunately, all too often the answer comes back in the tones of parochialism and provincialism as expressed by provincial premiers. They mutter away about protecting. They go into a fetal crouch to protect what is theirs. However, there is not a monolithic attitude to those issues in western Canada. The premiers do not speak for all western Canadians in taking that attitude. There is a tradition of reform in western Canada, a tradition of seeking a national interest as seen in the activities of Liberal premiers like T. C. Norris in Manitoba and in the writings of John Diefenderfer which exemplify a sense not only of national interest but also international interest. They were not small minds with shrinking values. They did not pull themselves in. They did not engage in a form of regional narcissism wherein they looked at their own images and said what was best for them. They had a vision of how the strength and resources of regions could be used to work to the benefit of the entire country.

The Prime Minister says we should not be afraid of giving the regions too much power. No one is afraid of giving the regions too much power, but the Prime Minister, as a sometime student of history, should know that there must be a balance between the regions and the centre, and that if the pendulum swings too far, the centre folds. We are going through that very period now. There is no other federal country in the world which has allowed its regions and provinces to become so decentralized and so powerful as we have in this country. It is time to right the balance, to bring it back into equilibrium and to begin to assert that only a national

[Mr. Axworthy.]

government speaking with a national voice can encompass the full flow of energy and resources to work for our totality.

Provincial boundaries are too limiting for the great tasks this country needs performed. We cannot ask provincial premiers, even those who are legitimately saying that they want to serve our interests, to broaden their scope. Their constituencies are their provinces. It would try the highest values of statesmanship to say "We want you to be great friends and neighbours to the provinces three or four to the west or east of you". That is why we have a national government.

However, as we lop off and give away piece by piece the federal presence, and as we hold 40-minute meetings and blithely walk out with a little grin and say "We just gave away the offshore resources today, what can we do next?", surely we are eroding and ripping apart the ability of this federal government to speak for an entire country.

The western voice which will be heard in this House is not one of parochialism and provincialism. It will try to seek a broader national interest and represent those westerners who see things in a different way from the westerners opposite.

In closing, let me remind the House of the words of another good Liberal, John Stuart Mill, when he said that we have far more to fear from the weaknesses of our enemies than from their strengths. He said that it is the task of an opposition to challenge those weaknesses for the sake of the country. It is a welcome challenge to challenge the weaknesses of the new members opposite, and judging by what we have seen so far, it is a very big job. I can assure the House that the group on this side is up to it.

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

**Mr. Duncan M. Beattie (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be back in an old home of mine. This is where I belong.

First, sir, I would like to commend and congratulate you as Deputy Speaker and as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. I commend and congratulate also the hon. member for Erie (Mr. Fretz) and the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. MacDonald) for the excellent presentations they made on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I am indeed fortunate in being able to represent Hamilton Mountain. I say this with all sincerity because I was the recipient of only 42 per cent of the popular vote. But I will tell this House and my constituents in Hamilton Mountain that I will be constant in my duties and do the best I can for the benefit of Canada in general and my constituents in particular.

As I mentioned earlier, this is not a new experience for me. I was here before, in the Twenty-ninth Parliament. However, this time I sit on the right side of the House, so it is a new experience for me in that regard.

I suppose Hamilton Mountain could be termed, in political terms at least, a swing riding, but I do not see why that should mitigate against my doing a responsible job. On the contrary, I