

*The Address—Mr. Roche*

the land representing Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. They will be following the illustrious tradition of dedicated service this country received from that stimulating and widely acclaimed couple, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Michener.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you once more my appreciation for the admirable way in which you and your officials have steered the debates of this assembly in a parliamentary context which is all but calm.

I also congratulate the mover (Mr. Stollery) and the seconder (Mr. Pelletier (Sherbrooke)) of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne and more particularly the hon. member for Sherbrooke who has displayed such a fine understanding of Canada's responsibilities towards the international community.

Speeches like the one delivered by the hon. member for Sherbrooke restore my faith in the willingness of members of all parties and from all regions of the country to co-operate for the common good of our society.

[*English*]

But, Mr. Speaker, I do not want this praise to go to the government's head, for the gap between what the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) was talking about and the program of the government as outlined in the throne speech is so wide that they might as well be in different worlds.

The throne speech gives only lip service to the vigorous steps that must be taken to "reduce disparities" between the rich and poor nations. It gives only a superficial glance at the reasons for these disparities, which are the central issue in the world today. The government rather contents itself with enlarging its own bureaucracy, seen in the creation of at least four new national bodies, as the supposed solution to the problems of our times.

The people for whom I speak certainly want our domestic problems of high inflation and high taxation solved, but we look beyond our own special interests and borders into the larger scene of our whole country and, indeed, the world. In Edmonton-Strathcona we want two specific advances that will bring about a more secure Canada: first, the use of arbitration to replace strikes in labour disputes involving essential services should be made compulsory; and second, the government should promote the formation in each province of an advisory council on technology, with representation from business, labour and the professions, to ensure that technological benefits are received by all mankind.

These are two steps that will help the west and all of Canada to develop in a way that contributes to economic and social stability. We want the economic discrimination against the west to stop so that the west can develop and play a stronger role for the good of Canada. That is the spirit of the new west that I represent.

We want to participate in the development of a modern Canada in which decentralized decision making restores the vitality of all our diverse regions. It is through the application of genuine decentralization, in the constitutional division of powers, the spreading out of federal government departments, and better intergovernmental relations, that the country can be pulled back from over-dependency on federal government programs. What we

[Mr. Roche.]

want in the new west is the chance for all Canadians to develop their opportunities.

It is time to bury the canard that the west, and particularly Alberta, is alienated from the rest of Canada. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is time for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to stop promoting the alleged opposition of Alberta to the national interest. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is time to cease the slander that western members of parliament have come here to obstruct parliament and not share in the creation of a better society. Again nothing could be further from the truth.

No, the west is not alienated from Ottawa, parliament, the Liberal party or even the person of the Prime Minister. What the west is alienated from is this government that has demonstrated it is hopelessly incapable of managing the economy. We are alienated from a government that has thrown hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of work and savaged us through inflation. We are alienated from a government that relies on massive social spending which is keeping tax levels excessively high.

There is a modern spirit in the new west that rises above pettiness, that refuses to be diverted from the great problems and potential of the times we live in. We are not looking for easy answers; rather, we want to share in formulating the right questions. For in looking beyond short-term and narrow interests we can identify three principal issues responsible for escalating international tensions today: resource exploitation, population and terrorism.

This winter's energy crisis has triggered great questions, for suddenly the experience of a limited oil shortage brought home to north Americans and west Europeans the previously unimaginable possibility that our way of life might not be indefinitely sustainable. Economists and ecologists have been telling us for years that our resources are limited; but as long as the heating oil arrived, the gas pumps flowed and the electrical gadgets hummed, no one took them very seriously. Now we know that we are vulnerable to the turning of a spigot. The jolt we have sustained is a blessing in disguise, because it is refocusing our minds on a new necessity: survival without abundance.

● (2010)

The ideas of progress, creative growth, expansion, surpluses, inexhaustible resources, have been synonymous with the development of western man since the industrial revolution. Science and technology have been the driving forces behind us. This is true no matter whether people live under a capitalist or a socialist system of government.

Industrial civilization is predicted on expansion. When our economy is not growing, we are in trouble. Growth has thus become an end in itself. Bigger is better. More and more harnessing of inanimate physical energy through the application of science to technology enables the economy to grow and the gross national product to accelerate at 7 per cent a year. And all of this is the hallmark of a successful society. Or is it?

How do we account for the barrage of confidence-shaking events that have filled us with a sense of unease and foreboding during the past decade? The Viet Nam war was