

change, beneficial change. They welcome progress, real progress in coming to grips with the problems facing Canada. They did not see this progress coming from this government for the very obvious reason that there was none. There was activity, a great deal of it; there were great plans, many of those; there were successive throne speeches with promises that inflation and unemployment would be beaten. There were large, very large amounts of money spent. In fact, Sir, there was just about everything, except results, and in Alberta, as the election returns proved, we judge on the basis of results, not on promises, and certainly not on charisma.

This being my contribution to the throne speech debate, I should most properly consider not just the past record of this government, dismal as it was, but rather the program it intends to pursue and that program was presumably outlined in the throne speech. Certainly, within that context, there is much to talk about, not only for what the throne speech includes but, as well, for what it leaves out.

However, one statement in that throne speech in particular, Mr. Speaker, was welcomed, certainly welcomed by me and I am sure the majority of people in my constituency. I refer to the statement that began:

The government recognizes that Western Canadians wish to build industrial strength on top of their region's great resource and energy base.

The omission of the word "agriculture" may add further fuel to the argument presented by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) earlier today. It apparently took the shock of an election wipe-out to draw this government's attention to what westerners have been saying for years. Yes, we do have a great resource and energy base, and nowhere is that more apparent than in my constituency where are located the headquarters of the vast majority of Canada's petroleum companies, and, incidentally where should be located the headquarters of the National Energy Board.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: That is why I welcome part of the comments of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson). I am sure he will come to my defence when, at a later date, I present arguments to back that suggestion.

The progressive policies of successive Alberta governments have fostered a healthy and prosperous petroleum industry which, in turn, has helped make Alberta one of the "have" provinces. However, Mr. Speaker, history has shown that great reliance on one industry, no matter how prosperous that industry, can be very dangerous. We had an example of the sort of thing that could occur just before the throne speech where rumours of what the speech might contain caused great gyrations in the western oil section of the stock markets. This is a reflection of the lack of confidence that the business community associated with the petroleum industry has in this government. May I add that the unnecessary delay in tabling the new energy policy is not helping their confidence in any way.

The petroleum industry has been good to Alberta and Alberta has been good to the petroleum industry. That is not to suggest that things cannot be improved because they certainly can. I hope that, if and when we see the

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energy policy, there will be an opportunity to discuss this point further. It must be pointed out that even a great industry like the oil and gas industry is limited in its capacity to absorb the growing work force of my area of Alberta. Anyone at all familiar with the situation in Alberta realizes that without the development of a substantial secondary industrial base, without the diversification of the economy, Alberta could in the not too distant future become a have-not province like too many others in Canada. No one can argue that awaiting that eventuality before acting will serve any useful purpose, to Alberta or to any other region of Canada. I want to make it abundantly clear that we are not asking for special treatment from Ottawa. We are not asking for handouts or for money to be diverted from other regions to ours. We are asking for fair and equal opportunity with other regions. We are simply asking to have those obstacles removed which now, unnecessarily and unfairly, prevent us from fulfilling our own potential. The cause of Canadian unity, the improvement of the material and social welfare of all Canadians is not well served by policies and, more important, by attitudes that are based on the concept of a central heartland and a subservient hinterland. For that reason, I welcome the commitment made in the throne speech to at least discuss the western viewpoint at a conference on western opportunities.

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), if he has not already done so, accept the invitation of Premier Lougheed to hold that conference in my constituency. The hospitality he and any other attending will receive will be of great aid in creating that friendly spirit which will be so necessary if the conference is to produce useful results. Welcomed as the planned conference is, I am sorry it is to be delayed until summer. By that time the honeymoon with the NDP may well be over and this opportunity to educate the future Leader of the Opposition will have been missed.

It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that the reference in the throne speech to improvement in the transportation system is more than mere window dressing to entice some western voters back to the Liberal fold. I think the voters of western Canada are entitled to be somewhat sceptical, especially so long as Edgar Benson remains head of the Canadian Transportation Commission.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: Also, I listened in vain to the recent speech by the new Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) for some evidence of new insights or appreciation of the Canadian transportation system and what might be done to improve it. Not only were there none, but a listener would be hard pressed to identify the speaker as having anything at all to do with the Ministry of Transport. As this government seems determined to hold on to power at all costs, I hope that the minister will soon turn his attention to his department.

The problems of transportation and access to markets are obviously of fundamental importance to the development of western Canadian industry. However, the west shares with all other regions of Canada the other basic weaknesses that exist in the economy which are readily apparent in the high unemployment rates and the disas-