

The Address—Mr. Vankoughnet

It is a shame to note that with all this country has to offer tourists we are saddled with such a dangerous balance of payments problem in the tourist industry. I think a firmer commitment from the Government of Canada to promote and facilitate Canadian vacations, plus amendments in the tax laws that would make investment in this industry more attractive, would go a long way toward making Canada a major world tourist market. I also believe that this industry should be represented in the government by a minister of tourism.

It is my contention that if we are to get serious about developing a tourist strategy for Canada, we must also take seriously the very real environmental problems our country has. Environmentalists are only just beginning to comprehend the magnitude of acid rain, toxic waste, and our environmental negligence in general.

There are many people in my riding who have voiced their opposition to current gun control legislation. I am in total agreement with the opinion of those people who have told me they feel the present legislation is harder on the legitimate holders of firearms than it is on the criminal element of society.

Agricultural policies and programs have a direct bearing on my riding and its people, many of whom farm for a living. Dairy and beef farming are practised in the riding, and our cheddar cheese is world famous. I would like to see the government become more aware of the special problems of these Canadian farmers.

I would like to see the production of industrial milk stabilized so that further threats to the livelihood of the existing small butter and cheese processors in southeastern Ontario do not force them out of business. It is important that governments take steps to encourage the protection of our prime farmland.

I strongly urge the new Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) to reintroduce his predecessor's tax measure that would allow farmers to deduct up to \$200,000 in capital gains taxes on the sale of farmland. These measures would greatly enhance the potential of farming in Canada and would allow us to become an even larger producer of food for sale at home and abroad.

The cost of living is a very real hardship for people of low incomes. This burden is especially hard on pensioners who have made their contribution to our country and should be allowed to retire in comfort and dignity. The same applies to veterans pensions. In the last Parliament our government had introduced legislation to increase the veterans pensions and do away with serious inequities in the existing legislation. I feel it is important that we remember the sacrifices that many Canadians made on the battlefields in two world wars and other conflicts by defending our political system, and that we recognize that fact with appropriate veterans pensions.

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It is important that the government contribute significant resources to youth employment and technical training programs. It is important that our young people be able to find

employment so as to instil the virtues of hard work and its just rewards.

The forest industry has played an important role in the settlement and employment aspects of Hastings-Frontenac. It is an industry which has meant much to Canada in the past, and still has a significant contribution to make to our national livelihood. However, the forest industry is not as strong as it can be. Our share of the world market is decreasing, and demand in the United States for our products is slowly declining. The federal government should take note of this situation, and in conjunction with the provincial governments step up its programs of assistance to modernize the industry.

Members representing rural ridings like Hastings-Frontenac will agree with me when I acknowledge the importance of voluntary organizations to the local community. There is probably no voluntary service more important to a rural community than the volunteers that comprise its fire department. I am pleased to see the Minister of Finance agrees with me and has wisely reintroduced the former minister of finance's increase in tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters.

Recent hearings by the CRTC have demonstrated the need for better access to radio and television programming in Canada. The availability of this type of modern day communication is not limited solely to the far north. In my riding, some 100 miles west of Ottawa, in the northern areas of Hastings-Frontenac and Lennox and Addington, residents are extremely limited in the television and radio programming they can receive. If the CRTC is concerned with the amount of domestic programming available to Canadians, it does not have to look to the far north to see its deficiencies. I would like to see the CRTC make every possible effort to get better broadcasting available to the residents of Hastings-Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, particularly the Bancroft area.

In comparison with the so-called pressing issues of the day, some of the concerns I have just raised may seem trivial to some people, but nothing could be further from the truth. They are important not only in themselves but because they represent and symbolize the legitimate problems of ordinary people, and it is important that we respond, as elected representatives of the people, to their wishes, however minor they may appear in comparison with the great issues of the day. For that reason I have brought them to the attention of Parliament in the hope that the government will act on them.

The people of my riding are certainly not immune to the very real problems facing Canada, nor, for that matter, am I. I would like to take this opportunity to address some of these concerns.

I firmly believe that our country is at a turning point in its history. Events have conspired to present us with the most critical problems we have dealt with since confederation. The political and economic issues facing us today are, in my opinion, unprecedented. They require well-thought-out, long-range solutions that will have to involve short-term sacrifice by many of us. There are no simplistic socialistic solutions. Nothing less than the very survival of our country rests on the successful resolution of these issues. Consultation, rather than