

strategies, a tariff structure, the building of a railroad, a system of freight rates and an immigration policy all designed to achieve one end, that of strengthening the fledgling economy of the new country. Central Canada was the core—the core of population and the core of industrial and economic development. The west was seen primarily as a vast storehouse of resources and quite literally the people there were intended to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

● (1600)

As it was introduced to the House of Commons in the throne speech of 1879, the original national policy consisted of a new and extensive system of tariff protection intended to promote domestic industries and agriculture. It was coupled with plans to press forward with the construction of the transcontinental Pacific Railway, and with the promotion of new settlement in the great northwest.

The basic idea was that the tariffs would create a national market and that the railway would serve that market from coast to coast. The railway was to carry new settlers to farms in the west, and in turn to transport the new farmers' agricultural produce to the east.

Thanks to the tariffs, industry was to flourish in central Canada. That industry was to supply the western demand for manufactured goods, while providing a large urban market for western produce.

Certainly under this arrangement the west was designed to be, in fact, a hinterland—a storehouse of primary resources to be utilized as required by the flourishing industrial east.

The government of the day repeatedly referred to western Canada as its "great empire"—famous and useful for its rich soil, boundless resources and salubrious climate.

That policy, begun in 1879, has been followed for 100 years, until recently. Despite party affiliation, successive governments down through the years have followed it. By and large it remained unaltered. Nobody tried to amend it until our present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made his attempt to alter it in 1973. You could say that attempt was long overdue. Indeed, it was. I am proud that it was the Prime Minister who is leader of my party who made that decision and took the initiative.

In the summer of 1973 there was convened the Western Economic Opportunities Conference in Calgary, a major historical event for the west and all Canada. For the first time in this country's history a national leader devoted the entire resources of the country to solving the particular and peculiar problems of one region. For the first time in our history there was provision for a full examination of what was wrong and lying at the root of western discontent or, as some call it, western alienation.

For the first time a national forum was established in which the government could study the problem with the political leaders of western Canada. For the first time we were given a commitment from the Prime Minister of Canada that the economic arrangement of things would change. The topics discussed are well known. They included agricultural policy, transportation, financial institutions subject to regional sensitivity, regional industry,

*The Address—Mr. Goodale*

growth built on the vast storehouse of natural resources in western Canada, and decentralization of industrial and government operations. As the Prime Minister said, never before have the resources of this country been dedicated, outside of wartime, to a single project like this. Work was done on these topics before the western conference took place. They were discussed at the conference, and work in this area has continued since then.

I know western Canadians are, as I am, impatient for greater changes to come about. We are anxious to see the initiatives begun during the western conference go forward. We are realistic enough to understand that we are dealing with a situation in this country which has persisted for over 100 years and we are not likely to turn the world on its head overnight, or even in a few years. Yet the first steps have been taken, commitments have been made and I am confident that, under its present leadership, the government will honour those commitments. Good progress has been made in the initial stages of carrying out the commitment. There is lots of work ahead and we are all anxious to get on with it.

We need, more than anything, good will and an honest, frank effort on all sides. I am referring to the way in which this country is organized. To overcome our difficulties will require good and honest effort. I ask opposition members of the House to make a special effort and offer constructive assistance, so that work following the initiatives of the western conference may reach fruition, and so that our legitimate aspirations, as raised at the conference, may be realized. I am asking opposition members to depart from patterns of the past. I hope I do not sound critical or negative.

We can attack and change two difficulties whose roots are in the past. First, a great many members from western Canada sit on the opposition side. The situation was somewhat altered in the last election; none the less, to a certain extent it continues as before.

The function of the opposition is to oppose. The difficulty is that Canadian people watching this chamber or listening to press reports of its debates—indeed, this applies to members of the press gallery who report our proceedings—may be under the impression that western Canadians are negative and critical. Such an impression does not advance our cause, especially if we want it to be known that something is wrong and needs changing. If change is to come we must have the co-operation and active assistance of people in all parts of this country. They may not be favourably disposed to offer that assistance if they constantly see western Canadians carping, offering negative criticism and, if I may say so, frequent cheap shots.

To give a specific example, Mr. Speaker, we have seen much press criticism of transportation. The government is blamed as much for snowfall in the Rockies as for problems relating to freight rates. Members can criticize freight rates legitimately, but there is not a heck of a lot the government can do about snowfall in the Rockies. Yet the people of Canada hear criticism offered under these two heads with equal vigour. The impression of the people may be that it is difficult to raise legitimate questions about legitimate grievances, and there are some.

**Mr. Paposki:** There are quite a few in Alberta.