

*The Address—Mr. Whittaker*

The constituency of Okanagan Boundary in beautiful British Columbia is so named because it takes in a large part of the sunny Okanagan Valley and extends some 150 miles along the American border, hence the name Boundary. The sunny Okanagan Valley and, indeed, most of the area in the riding, is semi-desert with a limited rainfall per year. Because we enjoy the best climate in Canada, it has over the years been discovered by many Canadians as a wonderful place to live. We have many retired people, people who have pioneered this great country of ours. Living in our valley, these people have come from all parts of Canada; especially from the three prairie provinces.

The very lifeblood of this area is, of course, water. The valley floors are studded with lakes and flowing rivers. Okanagan Lake, 80 miles long and some two miles wide, is the main one, but there are others, all of which are fed from the snowfall and the rains of the surrounding mountains. Most lakes in the mountains are dammed and used for irrigation; they also abound with fish. Some 50 good fishing lakes within 25 miles of the valley floor can also be found in the area.

Inflation hits the retired people very hard. They see the value of their dollar going down and they are on fixed income without any, or very little chance of insulating themselves against this. These people who have worked hard to build Canada, and in many cases pioneered Canada, are quick to see through the indifferent attitude of this federal government. They get very little break from income tax which they feel is being used to some extent to create a society of non-workers, something they were not able to enjoy when they were younger. They are concerned that Canada should not be allowed to deteriorate into a country of only hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The most noticeable thing about the Speech from the Throne is not what is in it, but its deficiencies. There is no provision for an immediate anti-inflationary program. There is no mention of curtailment of government spending, no mention of reduction in personal income tax, no mention of reduction or elimination of federal sales tax on all clothing and building supplies, no mention or provision for a full public inquiry into the Unemployment Insurance Commission and its distribution of unemployment benefits.

In the Speech from the Throne we do not see anything about a new industrial strategy for Canada. There is nothing in it about a resource policy, and even less about solving the most important problem we have in Canada today. As the member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) so ably pointed out when he referred to inflation, this is a major issue, as well as the increased cost of living. There is no way we can solve any of our other problems until we get inflation under control. I do not think we can do anything about the housing problem in Canada until we have dealt with inflation. I also do not believe we can solve the problem of regional disparities of income until inflation is lowered. Does anyone really believe we can solve the problem of redistribution of wealth before the problem of inflation is solved or before the aspect of poverty level is alleviated?

The critical thing is to come to grips with the problem of Canada's inflation now. I am afraid if we do not do so, and

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it keeps on at the rate of 10 per cent, our society and economic system will not survive. Imagine what is happening to the life savings of people who are faced with the erosion of the dollar at 10 per cent per year.

● (2010)

What are the people of Canada to think of a government that says inflation cannot be contained, that does not provide measures which appear to be useful in the short term and only proposes ad hoc or band-aid measures which are a piecemeal approach? What are the people of Canada to think of a government that is not prepared to deal appropriately with all these problems?

A great many people in my riding believe that much of the inflation is caused by government spending. It is ironic that the government of the day, after the Speech from the Throne, should bring in the estimates for next year's government expenditures which are up a whopping 20 per cent over the past year. To increase government spending that much in an inflationary period makes no sense at all. We have had in this country during the past few years a fantastic expansionary domestic monetary policy. The increase we have had in the money supply guarantees that we are going to have increased inflation. As long as the government can, and does, print money and continues to spend in such an extravagant manner, we are bound to have inflation. Wasteful spending in government must be eliminated in order to deal effectively with the chaotic situation facing us today.

Many of us have been asking why we are trading for trade's sake. Is this really what we should be doing in this changing world? The government says it will try to solve the inflation problem in Canada over the long run by some type of supply policies. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) is really concerned with supply problems, why does he not do something about our supply problems now? Why does he not slow down the export of some of our raw materials, or have them processed in our own country? Why do we not have a supply policy right now?

Of great concern to the people in my riding is the question of the environment. We have in the valley floors a series of lakes and rivers which are of good quality now but which must be protected for future generations to enjoy as we have in the past. I am disappointed that the government is not taking more notice of and becoming more involved in the preservation of our delicate environment. There was very little mention of this in the Speech from the Throne. It is vital to revise the sewage assistance program to give assistance to the upgrading of existing sewage plants and, even beyond this, to give every assistance to help remove sewage outfall from our lakes and rivers. Programs such as these are, in my opinion, much better than giveaway programs that help teach people how not to work and which remove any incentive to work.

There are many other proposals in the Speech from the Throne that people in my riding have been concerned about. Many are unhappy with the performance of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and additional ad hoc and band-aid measures will not satisfy them. The majority of people who pay into UIC and never intend to collect from it, those people who hear stories and rumours, also see what they believe to be abuses going on and they