

The Address—Mr. Caccia

Also the Speech from the Throne indicated that Canada and MOSST would be bringing forward a new policy for enhancing science and technology in Canada, especially enhancing strategic technologies. The Minister indicated that he would be bringing forth that strategy to the House within the next four months to five months. We await that strategy with great expectations.

At the same time—and I think it was welcomed by everyone—there was a recognition in the Speech from the Throne of the importance of our secondary and post-secondary school educational programs. We cannot take that approach too seriously. As we look at Canada and at the challenge which lies ahead of us, we will not be able to face those challenges without skilled, trained, and innovative people. Regardless of what we do in the policy sector, if those human resources are not available over the next 10 years to 15 years to compete in an innovative world, we will never succeed. It is important to recognize that this area was highlighted in the Speech from the Throne. We as parliamentarians should welcome it.

I am confident that everyone in this room has given considerable thought to what Canada and North America will be like in the last 10 years of this century and the beginning of the next. Historically this great nation of Canada was built upon our forest products, the products of our oceans, agricultural products, and mineral products.

Those industries have created a great deal of wealth for us. However, as we look to the future, we realize that these industries are all facing difficulties with greater competition in world markets and more productivity in other parts of the world. We will have to work to enhance them. As we think about the Canada of tomorrow, we realize that those industries are important and will always be important to us. They will provide great sources of livelihood and income. We will have to grow in a different area if we are to compete with European countries, the United States, countries such as Brazil and those in the Pacific Rim in the years ahead.

We will probably not be great manufacturers. We will not be prepared to accept the standard of living which other countries might accept to allow them to be great manufacturers of products. We will have to build our future upon a knowledge-intensive society. If that becomes our goal or our requirement, the great institutions which we must strengthen are our universities and colleges in our educational system.

The Speech from the Throne sets the framework for the Canada of tomorrow, and I am delighted that it does.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there questions or comments? Since there are no questions or comments, I recognize the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) on debate.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the remaining time this afternoon, I will try to condense a few thoughts flowing from my reaction to reading the Speech from

the Throne which set out a sense of direction for the Government of the day.

If we look at the Speech from the Throne wherein it deals with the environment, we find a few paragraphs at the end of the document which contain an assortment of thoughts related to a piece of legislation, an initiative in relation to parks, but nothing comprehensive or all pervasive as the public was expecting from the Government of Canada.

What is happening here is that the Government is dealing with the environment, through the Speech from the Throne, as if it were another activity to which attention must be paid in the same manner as it pays attention to other governmental activities, not with the overriding urgency and comprehensive approach required if we are to protect our waters, air, soil, and our major resources such as our forests and fisheries in such a manner that future generations will be able to benefit.

I will explain what I mean. As a result of the experiences we have witnessed from the impact of acid rain on buildings and other structures and on our fisheries and forests, from dumpsites along the Niagara River which have leached chemical substances into Lake Ontario, and from industrial activities along the St. Clair River on the Canadian side, we are rapidly reaching a point where we must conclude that inevitably the long-term economic interest of our nation coincides with environmental goals.

In other words, we do not have a choice between the economy on the one hand and the environment on the other. We cannot say that we will be able to do certain environmental things when the economy permits, but we must conclude that our natural resources and other basic resources such as air and water need protection because of economic considerations, not because of idealistic or perhaps sometimes romantic notions. The economic underpinning of this and future generations of Canadian industrialists and entrepreneurs depends upon the way we manage our basic resources today.

I should like to give an example. A couple of weeks ago we read on the front page of one of our national newspapers an article which indicated that our maple forests in the Province of Quebec are suffering from an increased percentage of damage. From year to year, according to the measurements which have been taken, this damage is increasing to the point where sugar-maple tree growers are seeking millions of dollars in compensation from the Government of Canada for the damage they are experiencing because they are downwind of sulphur emissions in the air from non-ferrous smelters in Quebec. Here is classic example of an economy being damaged downwind by industrial activity upwind and resulting from lack of environmental concern over the years.

● (1620)

If that experience were not enough, Mr. Speaker, we need only look across the Atlantic to the immense economic damage imposed on some European economies, particularly in the forest industry where there have been discoveries over the last