

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, when I called it one o'clock I was discussing the concept of an industrial strategy in Canada. I have had people say to me: "What is this industrial strategy thing; is it some kind of new political catchphrase?" I suppose when it is used the way it is in the Speech from the Throne it is not difficult to see or to speculate concerning why that kind of an interpretation could be taken or why that kind of a question could be asked about the significance of an industrial strategy. But, to many people in this country and to me it is much more than a catch-phrase. To me it means a definition of some direction, a definition of some direction based upon specific priorities that are chosen to take us in that direction. It means adopting a sense of direction in both the medium and longer range terms, rather than simply an ad hoc expediency determining the Canadian game plan on a day to day and hour to hour basis.

There are a number of different strategies, industrial strategies and economic development strategies, that are open to Canada which embody the spelling out of various priorities. In other words, the strategies adopted would depend to some extent at least on the priorities one adopted. The government has not given us its priorities. Certainly, it has not done so in the Speech from the Throne. I feel it is important to the people of Canada for me to outline what these foundation priorities are to me and would be to a Progressive Conservative industrial or economic strategy. Our first objective would be the creation of sufficient opportunities for meaningful employment for Canadians, and there is no evidence that the present government of Canada really accepts that priority. Our second goal is the attenuation of regional disparities by a consistent program of economic development. It follows from this that there has to be a complete review of the DREE operation. Our third priority is the pursuit of steady economic growth in terms both of gross national product and in terms of productivity through a program of incentives to encourage the initiative of Canadians in all branches of business, industry, farming and other occupations, whereas today we find a sense of frustration in respect of all our economic activity in Canada rather than a sense of encouragement.

Fourth, we recognize the need as a basic priority to communicate a sense of national purpose to the Canadian people, because if that is lacking then we cannot expect to accomplish very much. I suggest that this government has divided the country rather than give the people a sense of purpose.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I think these are the basic priorities of our national strategy that any government worth its salt should have been working on for several years, not as a loose and unco-ordinated or unconnected series of individual measures but as parts of a whole strategy for the development of Canada. That is what the government ought to have been doing, but under the gentleman opposite the process has not even been started and that is why it will be and why it will deserve to be severely judged by Canadians in years to come.

Speech from the Throne

Aside from these priorities there are a number of specific measures the government should have spelled out in the Speech from the Throne yesterday. There should have been a recognition, for example, of this government's responsibility to help provincial and local governments that are caught up in the greatly increased welfare costs that arise from the unemployment for which this national government is responsible. There should have been an undertaking to curb the steady erosion of the way of life represented by the family farm. Some of my supporters here will have a great deal to say about that, Mr. Speaker.

• (1410)

There ought to have been effective measures to ensure the conservation of our fisheries. Some of my colleagues here will have a great deal more to say about that, Mr. Speaker.

There should have been some proposal to draw Canadians together in the fight against inflation, and in particular some clarification of the role of the Prices and Incomes Commission. I say that we should be fighting hard now to get some guidelines accepted in fighting inflation. The Bank of Canada bears a great responsibility for the way in which our economy is performing. Considering the difficulties we have been going through, there should be a thorough review of the bank's policies as they have related to economic growth, unemployment and inflation over the past several years.

We should adopt immediately the concept of a full employment budget in this country. This is no longer revolutionary. That great radical, President Nixon, has adopted it in the United States, and the province of Ontario is operating on it.

Mr. Gibson: Are you in favour of Opportunities for Youth?

Mr. Stanfield: I am all in favour of youth.

Mr. Gibson: But not of opportunities for them.

Mr. Stanfield: I am even in favour of opportunities for the hon. member who has interrupted me.

Mr. Gibson: Thanks very much.

Mr. Stanfield: I realize very well that such a concept of budgeting does not guarantee full employment. But what it would do is show us clearly whether a particular budget is really expansionary for the economy as a whole, or whether it is not.

There should have been an indication of immediate action to right the wrongs done by the government to the old age pensioners, by bringing increases in the old age pension into line with the real increases in the cost of living.

There should have been some indication of a plan to improve our trading position in the world, besides improved credit arrangements of which I approve—at least, I hope I will be able to approve them when I see them. Besides business and other missions abroad, there should have been a plan based upon the realities of the world as it really is. Such a plan should be based upon a recognition that our enterprises have to compete in the world as it really is. All of this requires a tax structure, a