

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that in the weeks ahead, however short or long that time may be, my colleagues and I will be able to outline more fully our advice to the government on its agricultural policies, and advise this House of the clear alternatives which we will offer in this field in the months to come.

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I should like to preface my remarks by congratulating you on your election and by observing that because of the seating arrangement I find myself so far from Mr. Speaker that at one point I wondered whether I should send him a copy of my speech by telegram. I have reconsidered and, although I am last, so to speak, as a result of the seating arrangement, I take great solace in being a member of a generous party which has given me the honour of being the second member of our caucus to speak on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is with great pride that I stand before you as the first New Democratic Member of Parliament for the riding of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. I consider it a great honour to be the first socialist ever elected to the House of Commons by the citizens of this great riding.

It is traditional, Mr. Speaker, that many members, in their maiden speech, devote most of their time praising their constituency and discussing parochial matters. I intend to depart somewhat from this tradition in my speech. I shall naturally make reference to my constituency, but I also want to discuss two issues which I consider vital to the nation as a whole, namely, the state of the economy, with particular reference to economic independence and national unity in the context of French-English relations. Unfortunately, the time-limit prevents me from discussing the social legislation proposed in the Speech from the Throne. I am sure my colleagues will give it its due attention in subsequent speeches.

Sault Ste. Marie, whose history may be traced back to the seventeenth century and the days of the early French explorers, lies at the juncture of three Great Lakes, Superior, Michigan and Huron. Geographically, it is a part of what the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) referred to the other day as "glorious northern Ontario". Visitors from the earliest times have remarked on the scenic beauty of the area and the hospitality of its citizens.

Yet I would be remiss in my duty if I did not temper my laudatory comments for the area I love with an analysis of the special problems and needs of my constituency and its environs. "Glorious" northern Ontario is also neglected northern Ontario. This neglect has been manifest time and time again in the policies and attitudes of Liberal and Conservative governments. Northern Ontario is coveted for its abundance of natural resources, so much so that our economy is resource oriented, with the consequence that we have become reduced to hewers of wood, and drawers of water. Where is the manufacturing? Where is the secondary industry? Where are the jobs? The people of northern Ontario have the choice of digging up the minerals or cutting down the forests, but little else. In the case of my constituency, workers are dependent on one large industry, namely the Algoma Steel Corporation. Let there be a slump in the nickel, gold, uranium, pulp and paper or steel markets, and disaster strikes such a one industry town. Indeed, it would appear that certain mem-

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bers of the Liberal front bench would prefer to keep things this way so that when an election is called they can threaten the inhabitants of northern Ontario with the spectre of ghost towns if they dare to challenge government tax policy.

• (1630)

The Speech from the Throne mentions the government's intention to decentralize the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to better identify opportunities for economic development. I want to see the department pay particular attention to promoting secondary industry in Sault Ste. Marie and northern Ontario, and with more good sense in its decision making than was evidenced by the Michelin Tire Company fiasco in Nova Scotia. The neglect of the north is evident in the lack of an over-all economic policy for this area of Canada which is so rich in resources. But this neglect is also apparent in the attitude of the government toward the citizens of this area. Because the population of northern Ontario is relatively small and scattered, northerners all too often fail to get the ear of government. It is essential that they, who have so much in common, have strong representation in Ottawa.

Yet what has just recently been proposed? Through re-distribution, northern Ontario will lose two seats in this House. I cannot think of a more retrograde step than this denial of the right of the citizens of this region to have an effective voice in Ottawa. Further, I deplore the attitude of the hon. member for Port Arthur and Minister of the Crown (Mr. Andras) when he stated recently that to protest would do no good, that the decision on redistribution had been made. That kind of attitude, that indifference, we can do without. Northern Ontario in general, and Sault Ste. Marie in particular, deserve a better deal. The area is rich—rich in resources, rich in potential. Here we find an energetic, talented and generous people, a people who given the proper leadership and, above all, the opportunity can and will do great things for their country. I call upon the government, through sound economic planning, to give them this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I should like now to turn my attention to a matter which concerns all Canadians, namely, the state of the country's economy. It is most encouraging to hear in the throne speech that the government intends to reduce unemployment and contain inflation. What an about-face from the position taken by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in 1969 when he stated:

"I'm afraid there are a lot of people in this country who are bargaining . . . this country can't hang tough (on inflation) too long because it will be frightened when it sees unemployment go up to 6 per cent . . . But if the people think we are going to lose our nerve because of that, they should think again; we're not!"

Well, Mr. Speaker, unemployment surpassed 6 per cent, prices skyrocketed, the Liberals kept their nerve and lost their majority. The people of Canada have spoken. A truly just society means that people have the right to live with dignity, self-esteem and in reasonable comfort. To deny them this by denying them jobs in order to combat inflation is heartless, cruel, outdated and unnecessary.

Inflation can be controlled not by creating unemployment but by controlling price increases. I welcome the government's intention to set up a joint committee to