

● (1125)

The Government has to continue to be cautious about dumping of steel in this country. The surtax which was imposed on specialty steel in January shows its concern and interest. There are bills in the United States House of Representatives which would likewise provide protection in the United States. We have to be careful to try to keep the opportunities for sales of steel in the United States open and flowing. That is very important to our steel industry.

I would like to mention one or two other matters which were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne and which are very important in my constituency. There was mention of strengthening the regional development agreements with the provincial governments. I would like especially to mention the forestry industry. It is important that this Government recognize how important this industry is, not only to hundreds of single industry towns such as those in northern Ontario that depend on it, but to the whole national economy. I would like to see the Government make a firm and full commitment to that forestry agreement with the Province of Ontario.

I hope there will be a renewal of the NORDA agreement which will be running out in a couple of months. It is important to the small rural communities in tourism, agriculture and economic development, because some of the other programs just do not reach in and assist those communities. We need to put an important priority on tourism. My constituency is immediately adjacent to the United States and can benefit from the announced program there in many ways.

I would also like to mention the Livestock Stabilization Program which was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. It is very important to that very depressed industry that we work out an agreement with the provincial governments to maintain this industry, which is beneficial to all rural agricultural areas.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I think 1984 should be a time of building for our country; a time to build on the turnaround that we have seen in the economy, a time to make the improvements to the social security programs that were suggested in the Speech from the Throne, and to continue to provide the opportunities for all age categories in the communities which we represent in this place.

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to you on being promoted to the chair. I wish you well. I would also like, through you, Mr. Speaker, to extend my congratulations to Mr. Speaker Francis on his election as Speaker of this Parliament. I would like to extend my very best wishes to him as well.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McGrath:** The Speech from the Throne is a traditional part of the life of Parliament at the commencement of a new session. It is put there for a very good reason. It enables the House to examine the Government's program which is epitomized and contained in the Speech from the Throne. It gives

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all Members of the House, particularly Private Members, an opportunity to relate the Government's initiatives and legislative plans to the needs and priorities of Members' respective constituencies. It is a useful exercise. Unfortunately, nobody pays very much attention any more. One could say that is a contradiction. If it is a useful exercise, why are people not paying attention?

I look at the Government Treasury benches and I notice that another convention is being defied here today. It is an established convention of this House that there shall always be a Minister present throughout the sittings of the House regardless of what item the debate is on. That is another convention that seems to have died. That speaks to the need for the Government to get on with parliamentary reform.

● (1130)

We are now operating under an extension of provisional rules which were brought in by the special committee on parliamentary reform. We are essentially operating under the recommendations of the third report of that committee but there are seven other reports, substantively six, which speak to the evolutionary process of parliamentary reform and complete the work of the committee.

The recommendations contained in the third report under which we are now operating were indeed just the beginning of the exercise. In order to complete the exercise, the Government must get on with the implementation of the recommendations of the other six reports. I say six reports because one of those seven reports still outstanding is merely one that corrects the language of one of the previous reports.

I hope the Government will take seriously its plans to get on with parliamentary reform. It certainly is a priority of this Party because we must make the institution relevant to the needs of this modern country. We had to take a look at perfunctory debates, like the Speech from the Throne debate, to see whether or not it still has a useful place in our proceedings.

The Speech from the Throne to open the session, which was supposed to outline the Government's legislative program and address its priorities, was certainly a long speech. In terms of addressing priorities or announcing new intentions, we found very little in it. In fact, we found that the Government was paying lip service to the urgency of getting on with addressing the most pressing problem, unemployment, while at the same time not coming forward with any new programs. All we had was a recycling of existing programs by changing their names. Essentially, instead of getting a program of new legislative intentions, we in fact got an exercise in public relations.

The fact is that there are no new funds in any of the programs announced in the Speech from the Throne to address the problem of unemployment in this country. We are still operating under the same program that was announced in the Budget of last spring and fine-tuned in the announcement in April by the then Minister of Employment and Immigration. That situation will not change until the commencement of the next fiscal year and I do not think we can expect any change