

*The Address—Mr. Rompkey*

burgeoning area of Newfoundland, an area of rapid growth, including the fine towns of beautiful Green Bay, the fishing communities along the shores of White Bay, north to the town of St. Anthony, historic for its associations with Sir Wilfred Grenfell and that great medical mission of his. Along the coasts of Labrador we have Indian and Eskimo people in addition to the settlers. It encompasses Goose Bay airport, which boasts the longest runways in Canada east of Montreal, Churchill Falls and the massive hydroelectric project there, and the iron ore mining towns of Labrador City and Wabush along the Quebec border. This is a very diverse area, containing many different kinds of people, not only from Newfoundland but from many parts of the world.

Much of the area contains the potential for great prosperity, but it is also a region with many problems. Mr. Speaker, much has happened since I rose to speak in a similar debate a year ago. It has been a year of crises, of great challenges, and yet a year of great strides forward. The government, in a minority situation, has met these crises and challenges with courage and vision. Things are not what we would like them to be, far from it, but they are immeasurably better than they would have been had it not been for the policies of this Liberal government.

It is important to realize, not for the purpose of excuses but for the purpose of clarity and perspective, that the problems we have faced have been worldwide. For example, escalation of the price of oil in foreign countries caused an increase in the price of petroleum products in eastern Canada. The government will ensure that in future there will be one price for oil in all of Canada, and that the country will be self-sufficient in oil.

While the news of a subsidy for petroleum products and of the extension of the pipeline is welcome in Newfoundland, I should like to point out that in my riding we have our own source of clean and everlasting power in the Churchill River. The proposed development at Gull Island rapids will produce 1,700 megawatts of electricity, and at Muskrat Falls another 600 to 800 megawatts. Further, there is the possibility of power potential from the Eagle River. Altogether in that area we have the prospect of producing 10,000 megawatts of electricity for use in Canada. Little of that will be needed in the province of Newfoundland, but Newfoundland would like enough of it to meet its own needs in the foreseeable future, including any required for new industry that may be attracted to the province as the result of readily available power supply. As I say, there would still be a great deal available for use in other parts of the country.

It is important for the economic development of my riding, for the province of Newfoundland, and I believe for Canada, that the power development on the Lower Churchill River go ahead immediately, and that the power be brought across Labrador to the island of Newfoundland. I would hope the government would be as magnanimous in its assistance for this project as it was in regard to Manitoba and the Nelson River power development project. As I have said, Mr. Speaker, hydro power is clean and everlasting, and free from economic fluctuation in foreign countries. The development of this power potential is important for Newfoundland and for Canada, and I urge the

[Mr. Rompkey.]

government to give all possible assistance to my province in connection with it.

The problem that is heaviest on the minds and pockets of all Canadians is that of inflation and rising prices. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is small comfort, but nevertheless important to note that the problem of inflation is not confined to Canada but is in fact worldwide. Therefore, it cannot be solved in Canada alone, but only by Canada acting in co-operation with other countries. Nevertheless we in Canada must take action, and we have done so.

Our approach has not been to curtail wages and prices. We have seen this tried in other countries with disastrous effects, and we do not want to repeat the mistakes of other countries. Our approach is to try to increase the consumer spending power of Canadians. Our approach has been to attempt to put more money into people's pockets, particularly the pockets of those on low or fixed incomes who are hardest hit. We have done this by raising and indexing pensions and family allowances, by greater tax concessions, by changes to the Canada Pension Plan, and by selective subsidies on certain food items and on petroleum products. This has helped tremendously; things are still not good but they are immeasurably better than they would have been. This is what we did in the past and this is what we will continue to do in the future to help the Canadian consumer meet rising costs.

● (1600)

The great thing about this throne speech is that it attacks the cause of rising prices and not only the effect. The fact is that to bring food prices down you must bring up food supply. In a very positive way this speech suggests a policy that would help our food producers, particularly the farmers and the fishermen and this is of the most importance to me. While we are making progress in farming in Newfoundland, the mainstay of our economy has been and will be the fishery. With a market that is constantly demanding more fish, this government, realizing the importance of increasing our catch to meet increasing demand, has responded positively and emphatically by giving fisheries a prominent place in the throne speech and listing policies designed to increase production in both the inshore and offshore fishery. I am pleased and proud of the importance that this government has obviously attached to the fisheries, Mr. Speaker.

In summing up those sections of the speech dealing with fisheries, I should like to quote from an editorial in the *St. John's Evening Telegram* of March 2, 1974. In the past the *Telegram* has been very critical of our fisheries' policy, as a journal should be, but it is prepared to give credit where credit is due. To be quite fair, the editorial does urge the creation of a department of fisheries. But it also says that the fishery has been fully recognized in the Speech from the Throne and a great deal of emphasis has been placed on it. It says: "Be thankful things are suddenly going your way". That word "suddenly" is worth dwelling on, Mr. Speaker.

Suddenly, in October 1972, we had more Liberals from Atlantic Canada in the House of Commons. Suddenly, as a consequence, there was more talk of fisheries in caucus. Suddenly, there were resolutions on fisheries before the national convention. If fisheries has been emphasized in