

The Address

of South Shore and I owe him a debt of gratitude. South Shore is a beautiful place and he was a very fine caretaker.

I have much to learn about Mr. Crouse's record of persistence and fighting for his constituents. I have not had the opportunity to do that yet, but I have started my education by studying some of his replies to throne speeches over the years. Almost 35 years ago in a reply to the throne speech Mr. Crouse talked about trade and its importance. He is no doubt as perplexed as I am with the Liberals about-face on this matter.

• (1425)

In any case, he talked about our riding's many exporting activities. In the South Shore of Nova Scotia, we export fish, Christmas trees, paper as well as other forest products, and manufactured goods. However as Canada's closest land access departure point to Europe, our potential is sadly underutilized.

Education. It is ironic that Mr. Crouse did not put much faith in the Liberals' sincerity on this matter of making education accessible, affordable and excellent. It is ironic because of the recently announced plan of this government to endow excellence. This after having gutted the federal funding transfers to the provinces for education. Does anyone on that side of the House remember the ill-conceived Canada health and social transfer?

Mr. Crouse emphasized in his reply the close economic connection the riding has with the New England states. In this era of free trade, Canadians would be foolish to allow their government to impose decisions upon them that would lessen the potential benefits of trade with the U.S.

Nova Scotia has a great competitive advantage in this regard and would be hurt by this government if it superimposes partisan politics on Nova Scotia trade matters. It would be foolish to deny the right to get us our innovations, our products, our resources and our gas to the appropriate markets.

In his reply Mr. Crouse talked about the people back home in the riding. He spoke of their independence, their indomitable will, their belief in earning their own keep. South Shore families have many farmers, lumbermen and fishers connected with them.

We of the South Shore make much of our living from primary industries. We work hard and we work long hours. We do this to provide for our families and for our future. Let no person in this House cast aspersions on the work ethic of the people of the South Shore.

Taxation. Mr. Crouse talked about taxation. He stated "In the opinion of my constituents, taxation, especially direct taxation, has the effect of choking off business recovery and stifling expansion". No truer words need to be spoken. It is a simple proposition.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, pc): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of the constituency of South Shore in Nova Scotia to speak in reply to the throne speech which opened the 36th Parliament.

As is customary I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the Chair. I would also like to extend congratulations to those who assist you in your job. They have an important job.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague on his remarks. I listened to his words carefully. I think everyone in this Chamber should also listen to those words and take note of them.

I offer hearty congratulations to the mover of the throne speech and to its seconder. They did their duty well. Personally I would have been a little embarrassed to have moved such a piece of literature. I suppose that is because I am a Progressive Conservative and I am not much for the type of empty rhetoric that this particular throne speech represents.

It is Parliament's responsibility to scrutinize, question, explain, criticize and improve. In other words, Parliament talks. I am here to talk plainly to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the members present. I have a few things to say.

First the people of South Shore deserve better than what this government is putting forward as its plan for the future. I am honoured to be their representative. I am charged with a solemn duty. My riding has been represented by good people in the past. I want to learn from their example.

One of my most distinguished predecessors from South Shore came to this Parliament in 1957. I hope to do the legacy of Mr. Lloyd Crouse justice. He represented for many years the people

The Address

EI premiums. As well, the small business person needs a break but by the looks of things we should not expect too much in the way of growth and prosperity from this government.

I was completely exasperated by what I read in the debates of that other place in this Parliament, the red chamber. The leader of the government in the other place is a fellow Nova Scotian. I was intrigued to see his reply to a question about getting the government--I do not think I can say this-- to rethink their insistence on burdening small business owners with unreasonably high EI premiums.

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He was asked to explain to members why the Minister of Finance is continuing to insist on burdening those who create jobs with unreasonably high EI premiums. He replied that this Liberal government was not reducing the surplus intake because they want "to ensure that there will be enough revenue over a business cycle to pay the amounts authorized to be charged to the employment insurance account". Pardon me, but does this government expect a great influx of EI claimants? Is this government expecting a recession?

Spending. This government is being careful perhaps. I am not sure many would agree that this is totally out of character for them.

For instance in the last Parliament they allowed the former deputy prime minister to go on periodic spending sprees whenever she got the desire to be patriotic. As well there was the matter of cancelling the EH-101 helicopter contract and paying the enormous penalties, not to mention the flagrant disregard for human lives.

There was the cancellation of the Pearson airport privatization and the cost of putting that political quagmire to bed or at least partially tucking it in. And of course there was the prime minister's insistence on looking like a Chevy kind of guy while he still kept the Caddy.

• (1430)

The government is definitely a wolf in sheep's clothing when it comes to spending.

Natural resources. To be entirely honest, I did not think I read the throne speech correctly. I thought I had made a mistake because I did not see an iota of real substance about natural resources. I did not see anything that speaks to Canadians working hard to harvest, maintain and make a living by their wits and by their sweat the bounty of Canada's natural resources.

I heard nothing about sustainability. All I read was, and I quote "Canada's rich and diverse natural heritage is also a source of national pride and international acclaim. Canadians are both the beneficiary and the stewards of the land that holds 9 percent of the earth's fresh water, 10 percent of its forests and 25 percent of its wetlands". I thought it was a postcard. I really did. I could not wrap my head around it.

Perhaps someone on the government side can pinpoint the inconsistency. The government has not assured Nova Scotia that the fishery in Nova Scotia will survive. What about the fishery off my shore? What about the woodlands and our forests? What did Nova Scotians get from their oil and gas? What assurance do we have that it will be our oil and gas? Will it be used to benefit our economy and our standard of living?

I will wrap up. I would like to finish on Indian affairs. I am the critic for the Progressive Conservative Party on Indian affairs and northern development and nature resources. I will bring it down to one quote which I think is very important. It was made by a famous Canadian and certainly a famous Nova Scotian. The government and all the members in the House would do well to remember the words of the Right Hon. Robert Stanfield, a fellow Nova Scotian. He said this while visiting Calgary 30 years ago:

The leadership within the Indian community has, for the most part, been responsible and moderate. Their methods have generally been the peaceful demonstration and the reasoned brief. But if we do not respond to the moderate spokesmen of Indian Canada, there is a danger they will be displaced by the less patient and more militant leaders.