

The Address

We also have a responsibility to those who are prepared to lead the country in its economic growth. We have to give recognition to them that prosperity comes from that direction. As I said, we do not want the government to destroy the opportunities and initiatives of people to develop the country and continue to provide the growth and the jobs we so badly need.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Madam Speaker, my first words in this House must be those of appreciation for the privilege and honour of representing the riding of Erie. I would like to thank its voters for their trust and confidence without which I would not be here. I am aware of my responsibility to my constituents and indeed to all citizens of this country and I hope I will be equal to this task. I will not forget where I came from or who put me there. I will advance their position from the highest government in the land. I cannot deliver perfection but I can deliver accessibility, honesty and integrity.

On a personal note I would also like to thank my wife, Sherrie, and my children, Megan, Patrick, Alanna, Andrew and Sarah, for allowing me this privilege. I will endeavour to keep their personal sacrifices as minimal as possible.

I wish to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your appointment to this esteemed office of which you are most worthy.

I would further like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold on his election as Speaker to this 35th Parliament, a position of honour and responsibility unequalled in this House. I have enjoyed his sage advice over the years and regret the non-partisan aspect of his office now denies me the privilege of his counsel.

I further wish to congratulate the mover of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the hon. member for Bruce—Grey, and the seconder, the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria, on their addresses.

It is indeed a great honour for me to be in this Parliament, especially under such an honourable leader as the Prime Minister. It is a pleasure for me in my maiden address to introduce the riding of Erie to my fellow members of Parliament.

Having been born and raised in Erie it seemed only fitting that on finishing my formal education I would return to Erie. For many years I served on a great number of local committees and boards. This exposure to local issues and people made my decision to enter federal politics a little easier. I believe that Erie deserves the best representation possible in Ottawa and I hope I am worthy of that responsibility.

As some may gather from the name, Erie riding follows the north shore of Lake Erie, one of the fine Great Lakes. It extends from the border town of Fort Erie in the east to the western boundary of the regional municipality of Niagara. It is a

rural-urban riding encompassing the city of Port Colborne, the southern portion of the city of Welland, as well as the towns of Fort Erie, Pelham, West Lincoln, and the township of Wainfleet.

This is only geography and does not do justice to describing the heart of this riding. Erie riding was blessed with many Canadian riches. Our history, agricultural climate, economic potential and traditions in my humble opinion are unparalleled in any other part of Canada.

Many historical battles of the War of 1812 were fought on Erie soil. Erie also saw the likes of William Lyon Mackenzie during the Upper Canada rebellion of 1837 and the Fenian raids of the 1860s.

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The early settlers of Erie were joined by the United Empire Loyalists, a group of people dedicated to what would later become the Dominion of Canada. Over the years our riding was further blessed with healthy immigration from all European countries and most recently from the Pacific Rim. There has also been lateral migration from other areas of Canada: from the west, from the maritimes and from *la belle province de Québec*, all attracted by the lushness and opportunity that Erie offered. The riding indeed reflects the multicultural heritage that makes our country so strong. I hope I may embody some of their independent, industrious and enthusiastic spirit as I work for my constituents and dedicate myself to community and country.

On the very eastern boundary of Erie riding is the Niagara River which divides Canada from our neighbour, the United States. Our proximity to the American border offers us opportunities for trade and industrial development that will help enhance and diversify our economy well into the 21st century.

Apart from the historical significance, development potential and beauty of the riding, the moderate climate and fertile soil have made Erie famous for its fresh produce, bountiful orchards and vineyards. The Niagara region is one of the best grape growing regions in the world and forms the basis of Canada's wine industry. Poultry and dairy farming represent a solid mainstay in Erie's economy as well as that of our nation.

The climate and charm of Erie attracts a great number of tourists who come to enjoy the water and beaches of Lake Erie, to browse through our heritage museums and historic sites, to marvel at the ships plying the Welland Canal, an integral part of the St. Lawrence seaway system, or just to enjoy the pleasant surroundings and chat with our friendly residents.

Due to the rural nature of my riding many Erie residents embrace a traditional way of life. This lifestyle is rooted in their heritage and must be preserved. This preservation is a goal of mine during my first term in office. I support the maintenance of