

*The Address—Mr. Vankoughnet*

“pure laine” outside Quebec. By voting Yes, Quebecers would be saying: Quebec is French, Canada is English.

Quebeckers would thus be tolling the bell for Francophones outside Quebec, for their culture and their tongue. In a way, Quebecers would be perpetrating the cultural and linguistic genocide of their blood brothers.

Many ethnic groups, each with its characteristics and its own wealth, make up the Canadian mosaic, of which French Canadians are a jewel. Will Quebecers decide to shatter that mosaic which it took so many years for Canadians to build together? I close, Mr. Speaker, paraphrasing the words of the Quebec song writer: When all Canadians live off love, leaving behind distress and woes, on better days the sun will shine, we'll still be full of life, brothers of mine.

● (1730)

[English]

**Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings-Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin my remarks by offering my sincere congratulations to Madam Speaker on her prestigious election as Speaker of the House of Commons. In acquainting myself with the responsibilities and obligations of my new role, I sympathize with Madam Speaker in acquainting herself with her new role. I am sure that she will easily master these new responsibilities and carry out her role in the tradition of excellence and impartiality of past speakers.

It is a great honour for me to rise and deliver my maiden speech today. I would like to use the occasion of my maiden speech to introduce members of the House to my riding of Hastings-Frontenac and to discuss the issues that are of concern to my constituents, both at the local and national level. I will make my remarks in the context of a reply to the Speech from the Throne and incorporate what I have to say in the form of a request for government action on the issues that I raise.

First, I will give a brief description of my constituency. Hastings-Frontenac is located in southeastern Ontario. Its southern boundary skirts the city of Kingston and runs south on the Frontenac-Lennox and Addington county line to the Bay of Quinte. It contains Hastings County from approximately Highway 7 just south of Madoc and Marmora, to the Peterborough-Hastings county line. It follows the line north to the Renfrew-Nipissing district and Hastings county boundary, then follows the boundary line south and east, bordering Renfrew county. Finally, it follows the Frontenac county boundary with Lanark and Leeds counties until it reaches its southern extremity at the Bateaux Channel east of Kingston in the Thousand Islands area. Thus, I represent one of southern Ontario's biggest, most scenic and historical areas.

There are several small villages within the constituency. Some of the bigger communities include Amherstview, near Kingston; Napanee, which is my home town; Madoc; Marmora, Bancroft, Sydenham, Northbrook, Cloyne, Denbigh, Sharbot Lake, Tamworth, Verona, Coe Hill, Maynooth, Eldorado, Harrowsmith, Parham, Kaladar, Arden and Plevna.

As a result of the number of small communities within the riding, Hastings-Frontenac is blessed with many of the much cherished small town virtues.

My constituents are honest, hard-working, God-fearing and decent people. They are typical Canadians, and I am proud and honoured to represent them. The citizens of Hastings-Frontenac pride themselves on their self-reliance and their perseverance.

These characteristics are as much an inherited trait as they are products of the small town, rural environment: a heritage of our forefathers. Our area of eastern Ontario was settled primarily by United Empire Loyalists. They moved into the area following the American revolution and founded such communities as Bath, Ernestown, Millhaven, Sandhurst and Adolphustown. As time went on and the valuable land on the Bay of Quinte became scarce, they moved inland to settle such places as Odessa, Newburgh, Selby, Tamworth, Roblin, Yarker and Enterprise. These early settlers who made the journey north were a proud people and full of the strength of their convictions. To this day, the imprint they made on the communities they settled remains with their descendants, of which I am proud to be one.

My constituents and I believe that government interference in the economy should be limited to cases of necessity. The work ethic and incentives in the free enterprise system are fundamental elements of democracy, and exceptions to these conditions should be limited to cases of demonstrated need. Our country was built on these principles, and as long as they are allowed to flourish, Canada will be well served.

There are many issues about which my constituents feel very strongly. One of those issues is metric conversion. The frustration and cost of conversion to the producer are substantial. Likewise, the consumers of Canada end up frustrated and, worse, it is they who ultimately carry the producers' increased cost.

In the United States, which is our largest trading partner, conversion is voluntary.

I do not have to remind anyone that the actual need for the metric program was never established by debate in the House of Commons. This fact represents a callous and cynical affront to the parliamentary process, with implications for the future of this chamber greater and more significant than the actual metric program itself.

Another issue that is important to my constituents is capital punishment. Perhaps that is only natural when Joyceville and Millhaven penitentiaries are located in the riding. However, it seems to be an issue of concern to all Canadians, and indications are that a majority of them are in favour of its reinstatement.

Each of the regions of our country has its own particular natural beauty. Ontario is no exception. In eastern Ontario we boast of the splendor of the Canadian Shield, the Land o' Lakes. My riding typifies the beauty of the Shield, and many of my constituents make a living in the tourist industry, which attracts many people to the area.