

The Address—Mr. D. J. MacDonald

particularly exciting time in our political history. The party representation is such that the government could indeed be defeated in the House at any moment. However, I do not think hon. members—I am addressing myself here especially to my Liberal colleagues—should develop ulcers over this situation. I had the occasion of living through a situation similar to this in Prince Edward Island from 1966 to 1970. The Liberal government of Premier Alex Campbell governed Prince Edward Island with a majority of one vote, that of the Speaker. I think it is fair to say that this was a particularly successful period of our provincial history.

I am particularly pleased, Mr. Speaker, that my maiden speech in this House should coincide with the centennial of the province I have the honour of representing. As hon. members will know, Prince Edward Island celebrates this year its one hundredth anniversary as a member of the great Canadian confederation. We know that the road to confederation started in Prince Edward Island in 1864. However, Prince Edward Island took a few more years before joining confederation. We islanders like to think twice before we embark on any serious adventure, but in 1873 we felt that Canada was ready for us. It has now been 100 wonderful years and, needless to say, we have never regretted our decision nor do we regret it now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): As hon. members will know, the celebrations of our centennial have already started. We were privileged to have His Excellency the Governor General and Mrs. Michener officially open the centennial celebrations at the beginning of January. As was pointed out in the Speech from the Throne, we will be honoured by a visit by Her Majesty the Queen, later this year. Needless to say, Sir, all islanders look forward with great excitement to that historic occasion. If I may at this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend, on behalf of all islanders, a most cordial invitation to all members of this House to visit us during our centennial year. Even hon. members opposite are invited!

Mr. Marshall: Transportation free?

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): For a short while islanders are prepared to forget even their politics and, God knows, this is not always too easy. It is our birthday and we invite you to come and celebrate it with us. It will be a year to remember for those who are lucky enough to be islanders and all those who wish they were.

Having regard to the island, Sir, there are a few points I should like to touch on briefly. Hon. members will recall that a comprehensive development plan came into effect in March, 1969. Implementation of the plan covers the 15 years from 1969 to 1984 and it involves further development of all major areas of activity on the island—from agriculture to tourist facilities, from fisheries to manufacturing industries and many other fields of activity. May I simply recall here that federal participation in the plan is in the order of \$225 million.

In the agricultural sector a new family farm program has been initiated. Under this program, grants of up to \$6,000 are available to farm operators who can demonstrate through the presentation of a five-year plan that a

[Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan).]

grant would improve their net income. The response to the program has been encouraging and it is evident that farmers are taking advantage of the results of research and agricultural counselling and are recommending modern agricultural practice in both the planning and implementation of their proposals.

The Land Development Corporation, a provincial Crown corporation, is also supported with DREE funds and provides many programs to assist farmers in the expansion and improvement of their operations. DREE has provided financial assistance in the design and construction of new or improved waste disposal systems for several food processing plants in Prince Edward Island. In addition, departmental grants of over \$700,000 and loans of \$1 million have been authorized for the construction of sewage disposal facilities in Souris, Montague, Summerside and Charlottetown. A road building program, in effect since 1969, is producing a system of all-weather roads to assist the social and economic development of the province, at a cost of over \$7 million in federal funds.

As a result of an amendment to the plan in 1971 making provision for federal assistance in the construction of educational facilities, schools at Ellerslie and St. Louis have been completed, and work is under way on additional facilities at Cornwall, Sherwood and the Murray River-Sturgeon school. DREE is also helping with assistance to home improvement projects and home ownership in Prince Edward Island. Grants of up to \$1,000 are available for home improvements, and forgivable loans of up to \$4,000 may be obtained to assist low-income families in the purchase of homes. To date, approximately 3,500 families have benefited under this program.

As an attraction for the many tourists visiting the island, the two governments have created a major tourist attraction at Brudenell, where a resort and golf course were built at a cost of approximately \$2 million. A major urban development is now under way on the Summerside waterfront. I might say, when referring to this item, that it brings back the memory of something going on today in Prince Edward Island. The minister of the provincial government responsible for this program, a very smart young man of 47 years of age, is being buried today. I say this with due respect to him and the contribution he has made to Prince Edward Island. This major urban development is now under way on the Summerside waterfront—at least that dear fellow saw it commence—where a modern complex of commercial buildings, a convention hotel and marina are being constructed, with federal assistance, on reclaimed acreage in the harbour area.

Before leaving the topic of DREE programs, sir, I would add that I was extremely pleased to note in the Speech from the Throne that not only is the government pledged to carry on its fight to reduce regional economic disparities but the Department of Regional Economic Expansion will be decentralized to a greater degree. I think such a move will be most beneficial to those regions directly affected by the DREE programs, one of those regions being, of course, Prince Edward Island.

I should like to say a word about another industry which is vital to the economy of Prince Edward Island, that is, our fisheries. The year 1970 marked a turning