

The Address

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to the chair. I noted in your opening remarks that you quoted Disraeli. I know your comments reflect the feeling of many new members present in the House.

● (1505)

I know we all have the best of intentions and I hope that together with your guidance, Mr. Speaker, we will be successful in restoring dignity and respect to both politics and politicians. I am also mindful of your advice that we must remember we are not here because of personal merit, although that surely is a factor, but because free men and women have faith in us and in the principles we put forward during the election campaign. I appreciate those comments.

The Speaker: Order. Would hon. members please take their discussions behind the curtains.

Is this the hon. member's maiden speech?

Mr. Wells: Yes.

The Speaker: I wish you well in it.

Mr. Wells: Mr. Speaker, I hope all members will remember your comments. The reality is that we must all perform to the best of our ability and work toward restoring respect and dignity or, come next election, there will be another record number of new members sitting in this Chamber.

I congratulate all members on their election to the House. I am sure it is for them, as it is for me, an honour and a privilege to represent their constituents and bring their concerns forward to this assembly. I look forward to working closely and co-operatively with all members, regardless of party affiliation, during the next four years.

I thank the people of South Shore, Nova Scotia, for putting their trust and faith in me on October 25. My riding, as were many others across Canada, was represented by another party for many years prior to the past election. In fact the last Liberal to represent the South Shore in Parliament was the late Robert Winters. He last served South Shore in 1957.

I do not purport to be another Robert Winters, but I can promise the people of the South Shore that I will represent each and every one of them to the best of my ability. I will fulfil my commitments to them as they were stated over the long and very arduous nomination process and election campaign.

The riding of South Shore is one of the great coastal ridings of Canada. It is presently the home of the largest fishing constituency in all of Canada. In 1992 there were approximately 5,000 active fishermen and 126 licensed processing plants in my riding alone. The value of the annual catch is close to \$200 million per year, for a market value of approximately \$375 million.

In my constituency there are three counties, all of which have resource based economies. Shelburne County is the fishing capital of Canada. Queens County is known as the forestry capital of Canada, and Lunenburg County is known as the Christmas tree capital of Canada. One could say that the South Shore is the capital capital of Canada with all those capitals.

My riding extends from the community of Hubbards in the east to Charlesville 150 miles to the west. It extends 50 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean to the communities of New Ross and New Germany in Lunenburg County, Caledonia and Greenfield in Queens County, and to Upper Ohio in Shelburne County. Its bays contain thousands of islands from East Ironbound and Tancook in the east to Seal Island and Cape Sable Island in the west.

The historic towns of Lunenburg, Mahone Bay, Bridgewater, Liverpool, Shelburne, Lockeport and Clark's Harbour are all located on the South Shore, as are many quaint and beautiful villages such as my home of Chester and other communities such as Blandford, New Ross, Riverport, Port Mouton, East Green Harbour and Barrington Passage. I could go on and on. I would like to name them all but I understand I am limited in time.

I still remember the Friday morning 10 days before the past election when the Prime Minister visited historic Lunenburg, home of the Bluenose, the Bounty and the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic. This was a proud occasion for the people of the South Shore, one which I am sure left many people touched by his honesty and humanity.

It goes without saying, as we hear the names of these historic towns and villages, that tourism plays a major part in the lives of my constituents. We must continue to promote tourism as it is serving to revitalize communities devastated by the downturn in the fishery. It generates more than \$100 million annually and provides employment for thousands of people on the South Shore. It is an industry that can and will play a leading role in the economic recovery we are all anticipating.

● (1510)

As I said earlier, the economy of my riding is primarily resource based. My constituents are affected by and concerned with the downturn in the fishery, the challenges in the forestry sector, particularly those of the pulp and paper industry, and the difficulties and uncertainty being experienced in the agricultural sector.

I for one believe the fishery can be prosperous once again if we properly manage the change. I have faith, and I know that faith is not misplaced, in the present minister of fisheries. I applaud his willingness to listen and his courage to act. Once we set aside special interests in favour of community interests practical solutions will be found.