

*The Address—Mr. Frenette*

on such wise words as I just quoted which were written by an experienced businessman who certainly did a lot for Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I come back to the brief which was handed to me by our chamber of commerce, where the second paragraph reads as follows:

Our chamber strongly urges the Canadian government to adopt a national distinctive flag and an official version of "O Canada", before 1967.

May I be permitted to insist further on this point, Mr. Speaker, and I hope I am not being presumptuous in relying on the promises made by the right hon. Prime Minister of our country who, on various occasions, promised we would have shortly a national distinctive flag.

Needless to say that this problem is particularly ticklish, in view of the fact that our country is made up of two different ethnic groups, but I remain convinced that the majority of the Canadian people will welcome and commend such a step. I am sure that when parliament assumes its responsibilities and gives our country a distinctive national flag, it will choose one which bears no relation to any country and shows no foreign allegiance.

With regard to the national anthem "O Canada", I see no problem there since already it is sung everywhere in Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver.

Mr. Speaker, in that brief, reference is also made to bilingualism in the federal civil service:

Our chamber recommends to the Canadian parliament the adoption of a measure providing for a bonus or a gratuity to every bilingual federal civil servant or employee of the crown.

Mr. Speaker, I do not insist any further because my group has already put forward, during various election campaigns, some suggestions which were supported by other organizations. It stands to reason that we have not changed, and we submit that such a step on the part of the government would certainly promote bilingualism in the civil service. It is recognized by all that significant progress has been made in that field these last few years. We hope that this government will continue its efforts to achieve the recognition of the rights of the French language, and not only of the French language, but rather of bilingualism in the civil service.

A special paragraph in that brief concerns a project of a particular interest for our region. That is the construction of the Three Rivers bridge, and I am pleased to read that paragraph into the record:

Our chamber considers that the construction of a bridge over the St. Lawrence river at Three Rivers is closely related to the economic and industrial development of our region, all the more so since the announcement of the development of

a steel complex at Becancour, and it insists that the federal government take the necessary steps to remove the difficulties which could hold up the immediate carrying out of that project.

Mr. Speaker, it seems lately that there has been an imbroglio concerning that project which was accepted by the last parliament. Politics should not be played with that absolutely essential project for the region. I hope that this administration will remove the difficulties as soon as possible and work in co-operation with everyone in order to further promote the economic development of our region.

Mr. Speaker, the next paragraph concerns the national employment service and reads as follows:

The chamber reiterates its request that an office or a sub-office of the national employment service be established at some strategic point in the riding. Recent developments have shown the merits of this request since our region, with the exception of a very small sector, has been cut off from federal assistance designed to stimulate economic and industrial development.

The establishment of an office or a sub-office of the national employment service and of the unemployment insurance commission would, of course, be a valuable asset for my fellow citizens, for the workers and more particularly for the unemployed in my riding.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, if we anticipated for the near future the end of that disaster which is unemployment, we would not insist anymore upon the establishment of such an office. But in the face of a quite poor situation and a future not too promising in that field, I urge the government to set up, especially in Portneuf riding, an office or an agency of the national unemployment insurance service, because the unemployed in my riding live quite far away from the Quebec city's office they have to report to. As a result, it costs them a good deal of money in travelling and other expenses when they have to deal with that office, since the distance may vary between 40, 50 and even 100 miles, which seems to me ridiculous and obviously creates many problems to taxpayers who have to avail themselves of the services of that office.

Moreover, there is another difficulty, one which I have already referred to, and it is that so-called designated areas, labour surplus areas, have been established according to statistics supplied by unemployment insurance offices. And here is the result: the Portneuf area which, in my humble opinion, is surely a labour surplus area, has been ignored since it has been included with that of greater Quebec, where the needs are obviously not the same as those of the Portneuf area.