

*The Address—Mr. Ferguson*

government will serve all of us well during her tenure as Speaker of this Thirty-second Parliament. This is indeed an historic Parliament to be under the direction of the first woman Speaker. I also want to commend my colleagues from Rimouski (Mrs. Côté) and Sudbury (Mr. Frith), who moved and seconded the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, on the excellence of their speeches on that occasion. They were beyond reproach.

The background information they have given the House regarding the parts of Canada they represent certainly assists us all to reach a fuller understanding of our country, with its diversities and its common problems. As the newly elected member for the constituency of Lambton-Middlesex I shall, in my maiden speech, take the opportunity to speak about this part of our country—its past, its present, and the potential contribution it has to make to our nation, Canada.

I want to place on the record my appreciation to the electors of the constituency of Lambton-Middlesex for giving me this opportunity to serve them in this Thirty-second Parliament. The riding is a 6,400 square mile area on the southern tip of Lake Huron, bordering part of one of the world's great seaways. It embraces a blend of agriculture and small business that is unique. It is also rich in history.

In the early 1800s, when our relations with our neighbours to the south were not as friendly as they are today, the victorious battle of the Longwoods was fought in the southern part of this constituency. Later, some of the United Empire Loyalists settled here and carved homesteads from this wilderness land. In the next four decades much of the area in both Lambton and Middlesex counties was settled by immigrants primarily from Ireland, Scotland, and England, who made that emotional decision to leave the country of their birth for a country of their choice. They named their settlements after communities in their homelands, and towns like Glencoe, Appin, and Watford grew, reminding them of their roots. The area prospered and the population increased as the pioneers cleared and cultivated the fertile soil, established their businesses in the context of woollen mills, flour mills, cheese factories, and blacksmith shops, and built their schools and their places of worship.

● (1620)

Historians tell us of a man named Lucas who was forced to leave his farm in New York during this period. He set out to find freedom in Canada. As he proceeded through the Ennis-killen swamps, the bedding in his wagon shifted and was dragged along the ground. When he arrived at Watford to spend the night, he was refused lodging because of a foul-smelling substance on his clothes and wagon. He was ordered out of town. A short time later the people in the community realized what the source of the pollution was. It was oil, and after a full investigation the oil industry in Canada was born in my community near a town which was later named Oil

Springs. Shortly after, a few miles away, a new community was established named Petrolia.

Today, more than 100 years after that initial discovery, some of these oil wells are still producing in Lambton county and new ones are being brought into production. These are not, of course, on the scale of productivity we find in other areas of Canada today. It is significant, though, that we are rebuilding part of this old oil field and it is being called Discovery Petrolia, due to be opened in July for tourism in the area. In those early days, the area prospered as a result of the oil industry and the agricultural sector. One of those early pioneers had over 200 oil wells on his property. His name was J. H. Fairbank and he served in this House in the Fifth Parliament of Canada.

It is also interesting to note that another member from the Lambton area was represented in Canada's first four parliaments—Alexander McKenzie, a former prime minister of our country.

Of later note, we in our constituency had the honour of having a very lovely and gracious young lady, Sheila Rose, presented with the Order of Canada at the residence of the Governor General. This was for her work in the field of education and promoting the cause of Canada from coast to coast. The award was very well deserved, I may say.

The technology developed by those early pioneers of the oil industry spread abroad during the following generations. Men went to the Middle East, to South America, to Borneo and other parts of the world, taking their experience and equipment with them. Drill bits are still manufactured in the town of Petrolia for shipment to domestic and foreign fields. To this day, Canadian technology developed by those entrepreneurs is being utilized all over the world. This technology has benefited the world, and as Canadians we can be justifiably proud of our pioneers and of our heritage.

For a number of years at the turn of the century many thousands of people moved to the prairie provinces from my region taking with them their resourcefulness and their expertise in agriculture. There, they were joined by immigrants from all over the world who were making this their country of choice.

In my area, in my lifetime, I have witnessed people from other nations joining us, the Slovak people in the 1930s, the Dutch in the 1950s and the Portuguese in the late 1960s, to name but a few. They came to Canada, a land of opportunity, a land of freedom, and they have made our lives richer by their presence here. I admire their courage and remember that our ancestors too, made this their country of choice. They settled among our native people who still reside in the area today in the communities of Kettle Point, Muncey and Caradoc. It is with pride that these native people contribute and involve themselves in sports, community activities, and society in general.