

*The Address—Mr. Ferguson*

standards of world demand, it is necessary to undertake expansion of existing facilities. We are looking to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to aid us in this goal.

We in Saint John and Atlantic Canada have a real contribution to make to Canada and to confederation. We are blessed with a wealth of natural resources and resourceful talent. Atlantic Canada is strong. We have a fine history in shipbuilding, farming, forestry, mining and fishing. We have great sea ports, beautiful beaches, and unpolluted streams. We are a good people, and that is really our strength. We look to the federal government in Saint John and in the Atlantic region for leadership and encouragement to build upon our strengths. We look to the federal government for incentives to improve our economy and lifestyle.

It is important that collectively our citizens, business, labour, and government at all levels, work hand in hand to develop our area and to make opportunities available in order that our young people can stay at home if they so choose and take their rightful place in society.

The opportunities to develop a wide range of energy resources in Atlantic Canada are unparalleled. There is great opportunity to develop our coal reserves and to explore the concept of harnessing the beautiful Bay of Fundy tides, including wave energy. It is now for us to move with haste in development and research in this regard.

On the outskirts of Saint John there is Point Lepreau, a nuclear plant which is programmed to go into operation within the next 18 months. As in most areas in the country, in Saint John there is much concern about safety. I am pleased that this government will be setting up a parliamentary committee to study all aspects of nuclear power. For Canada today nuclear power is becoming one alternative to conventional fossil fuels. Safety at all times has to be the overriding concern.

I am pleased that the government will form a youth employment secretariat. This will streamline all the federal programs under one department. Young people must have the opportunity to work and grow in this country. If the economic climate continues to affect young people from across the country adversely, we will sow seeds of disillusionment rather than seeds of hope. Every effort must be made to encourage job training and retraining for young people. This is mandatory in an ever-changing society.

In excess of 51 per cent of the people of this country are female. I am pleased that this government will place before parliament an employment strategy for women. Today only 3.5 per cent of the membership of the House of Commons are women. Not only have women been missing in significant numbers from the House of Commons, but they have also been missing from boardrooms, commissions, and the policy-making areas of our political system.

**An hon. Member:** How many have you hired?

**Mr. Ferguson:** I hired 12. In order to correct some of the injustices which have been done during the past ten years, a

[Mr. Ferguson.]

masterful effort will be required. This Parliament must do everything possible to provide opportunities for women to take their rightful place in society. The figures regarding women and poverty are staggering. This must be changed.

In closing, I want to talk briefly about the senior citizens of Canada. I am one of those lucky Canadians whose mother is still living. She will be 91 on November 30. She runs her own home, and she is a great campaigner.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Ferguson:** We must do everything possible to encourage our mothers, grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers. Every member of this House must keep in mind rising prices, rising interest rates and the effect they are having on senior citizens, most of whom are living on fixed incomes. We have an obligation and a responsibility. After all, they were the builders of this nation, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure that each and every one can live in dignity.

We have much to be thankful for, and counting our blessings is not a bad motto. As a maritimer and as a Canadian I want our people to stay in this country and prosper and to build a future based on pride, dedication, and hard work. We in Saint John and all those from one end of this country to the other have the natural resources and the will to accomplish this goal. We have a great resource, our people, to meet this challenge, and there is no reason why our dreams cannot be carried to reality.

**Mr. Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton)):** Will the hon. member accept a question?

**Mr. Ferguson:** Sure, I will accept a question.

**Mr. Lessard:** First I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Saint John (Mr. Ferguson) on his speech and, in particular, on the delivery of his speech. Although I do not agree with everything he had to say, I want to compliment him on his well-delivered speech.

I would like to ask the hon. member a question. He stated that government programming has negatively affected Saint John and that roughly 200 people will be moving away, might be moving away, or might be affected. I would like to ask the hon. member if I would be fair in stating that through DREE and its programming, and by making Saint John a special area, the previous government contributed much to the development of Saint John, the city the hon. member is so proud to be representing here today. I had the pleasure to be in Saint John and to meet the hon. gentleman. Will he agree with me that DREE has contributed much to the well-being of his city?

**Mr. Ferguson:** Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour to be asked a question by the hon. gentleman. I did meet the hon. gentleman in Saint John, and it is a beautiful city.