

The Address—Mr. Althouse

months we intend to undertake the reform of private pension plans so that every Canadian can enjoy an adequate retirement income. The Canada Pension Plan has to be updated as well to protect the housewife who has no income from private pension plans. The Quebec Pension Plan needs the very same reforms. We have to examine whether the annual guaranteed income is feasible, when and how. So I ask: Whom could we work with in Quebec? We do not believe in a country only for what it can give us, a country means a lot more than that.

Today, I tried to explain that it is not by accident that Canada is a success. It is so because of federalism. It is not by accident that it has so well served the poor and the ordinary people, wherever they live. It is thanks to federalism which allows a fair distribution of riches. It is not by accident. There are many new and relatively young members in the House of Commons who have little experience in public life. But let us just recall a few dates: it was not by accident that the federal government rather than the provincial governments established unemployment insurance back in 1935, family allowances in 1945, universal old age pensions in 1951, the pension supplement in 1967, cost-shared social services and hospital insurance in 1957 and medicare in 1967. It was thanks to federalism.

For those who suffer hardships at some time in their lives, Canadian federalism is a friend, a much needed brother that has a face; it is an Albertan, an Ontarian, a woman in British Columbia. In a word, it is another Canadian.

● (1420)

[English]

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating our new Speaker on her appointment to that important office in this new Parliament. I wish her well. I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for Rimouski (Mrs. Côté) and the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith) for their speeches as the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

As this is my first speech in this House I would like to take a moment to thank the voters of my constituency for their confidence in electing me to this Parliament.

My riding is an agricultural riding with farmers producing most products that are produced in Canada. It is a particular honour, as a farmer myself representing such a riding, to have been named the agricultural critic for my party.

In this vein I also wish to congratulate the hon. member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Whelan) on his reappointment as Minister of Agriculture. I wish him well in his position. I also want to convey this sentiment to the hon. member for Elgin (Mr. Wise), a member of the Conservative party, in his position as chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I am looking forward to working with both of those gentlemen on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and in the House.

My riding, Humboldt-Lake Centre, is located in the centre of rural Saskatchewan, east of Saskatoon and north of Regina, comprising about 150 or 160 miles of territory in each direction from those cities. The town of Humboldt is the largest centre in the riding with a population of about 4,500 people. Our industries are agriculture, potash mining and farm equipment manufacturing. We have about 12 farm equipment manufacturers manufacturing large cultivators, rod weeders, stone picking equipment and various kinds of grain hauling equipment. We have four potash mines in Guernsey, Colonsay, Allan and Patience Lake. Our production is diversified and efficient to the point of being world competitive by force of our small local domestic market for our goods, and because we have developed a world class technology to compete on a worldwide basis, both with the production of potash and our agriculture products and, I might add, our farm machinery production.

In the farm machinery field I should also point out that the Prairie Agriculture Machinery Institute is located in Humboldt. It is supported by the three Prairie governments, and it is recognized across North America and, indeed, around the world, as a leader in the testing of farm equipment.

As is always the case, the people of our constituency are shaped by our history and our environment. Though our province of Saskatchewan will be 75 years old this year, there have been people there much longer than that, and all of those people have been immigrants. Immigrant peoples who have been there the longest are the Cree, followed by the Saulteaux who moved in from the northeast a few hundred years ago. From the south we have the Sioux who moved in after the days of white man's recorded history. Others who followed were Europeans, Americans and some Asians. They arrived mostly in the last 100 years. They founded a part of Canada that is vast and lonely but with plenty of room for growth, not only economically but for future generations as well.

● (1430)

To many of these newcomers, that vastness meant security. Our climate and geography can be harsh, and the immigrants who pioneered that region quickly found that life was easier for individuals if they combined forces against the elements. The Indians worked and lived in groups to combat those elements. When the white man came he followed a similar pattern. The white man used building bees so that shelters could be constructed quickly. Both groups co-operated in managing food supplies, the Indians by working together on buffalo hunts and the white man by setting up beef rings so that when an animal was killed the meat could be distributed around the community to avoid its spoiling.

As well, the people there worked together to provide necessary community services, roads and trails, schools, and hospitals. Having established a system and tradition of co-operation and working together to survive the natural elements and to develop some semblance of social service, the early settlers of our region very quickly turned their attention to trying to tame the economic system that they lived within. They reasoned