

The Address—Mr. Thomas

would find that this wilderness has been transformed into the best developed agricultural area in western Canada. The fact that these people were able to maintain a cultural tradition is worthy of praise. I feel that Canadians of Polish, Roumanian, Ukrainian or any other minority group are better Canadians if they realize that the stock from which they come has a fine past, incorporated in literature, music, handicrafts and religious faith. It will certainly give them not only a pride of origin, but, at the same time, confidence in their own ability to accomplish things that are worth while.

The hon. member for Vancouver South said that in diversity lies our strength. Canada is not a country of one race of people. We are in fact a country of minorities. Whoever we may be, wherever we came from, or whence came our parents or ancestors, we as Canadians should be proud of our different racial origins, proud of our traditions and of our culture. We should be proud of the fact that these things can weld us together, to make us not only better Canadians and better men, but also to make Canada, this great country of ours, a better place in which to live.

Mr. Ray Thomas (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, since the house opened on September 15 I have been sitting back in my little corner listening to the flow of oratory from both sides of the house. Because of that realization has come to me that I am among the best speakers available in the country; therefore I am rather hesitant about taking part in this debate.

I should like to add my voice to those of hon. members who have spoken earlier in welcoming the new members from Newfoundland. I speak with firsthand information, because I spent a good deal of time in Newfoundland during the last war. I found that the people of that new province are extremely hospitable, hardy and industrious. With this in mind I should like to say that in my view hon. members from Newfoundland will add greatly to the dignity of this chamber.

For a few moments this afternoon I should like to speak about my home constituency of Wetaskiwin. It is not as large or as barren as some of the constituencies thus far described. Neither does it produce an abundance of fruit, or, as has been brought to the attention of the house previously in respect of the constituency represented by the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank), nuts. My constituency, however, is a mixed farming area. The eastern half consists of rolling fertile hills, with an abundance of water. This makes it an unrivalled mixed farming area. My reference to water is not

confined to rainfall. Sometimes we are a little short of that. I had reference more particularly to the lakes, streams, and sloughs which are so necessary to the raising of live-stock. Also in the central part of the constituency one finds a chain of lakes which in their pure scenic beauty are unrivalled anywhere in Canada. Any hon. members who at one time or another may have done a little fishing around Pigeon lake or Buck lake will bear me out in this.

In the northwest section of my constituency one finds immense stands of timber around Breton and Winfield. During the last few years fires have depleted these natural stands, and I say it would be in the interests of all if reforestation in that area were implemented.

On February 13, 1947, the bombshell exploded. Imperial's Leduc No. 1 well was brought into production, twelve miles northwest of the village of Leduc and twenty miles southwest of Edmonton. The oil rush was on. Overnight small, sleepy, complacent farming towns became buzzing beehives of activity. Tin-hatted oil men were brushing shoulders with the farmers on their way to market.

In December of that year thirty-one wells were in production in that area alone, producing 99,750 barrels of oil. At the end of the first year a total of forty-seven wells had been drilled in the Leduc sector, and out of that number forty-two had proven to be productive.

Owing to the influx of oil workers, there was a great demand for accommodation. The Imperial Oil Company consulted the provincial planning commission and drew up plans for a boomtown. This town became the town of Devon. One might think that a town of this size or description would be only a group of tumble-down quickly-erected buildings, tents and shacks. This did not prove to be so, however. Devon is one of the most modern small towns to be found in Canada. The bungalows constructed for the use of the oil workers are trim and modern, and would do justice to the residential area of any city in Canada. The streets are landscaped for beauty, and all facilities for recreation and sports have been provided. They have a gymnasium, a skating rink, a curling rink, and recreation grounds.

It will be remembered that Atlantic No. 3 well ran wild for six months, and also resulted in the closing down during at least part of that time of this oil field. But during the six months in which the well ran wild it produced over a million barrels of oil. This fact in itself proves the immense potentialities of that oil field. During the past year a refinery has been built at South Edmonton to accommodate at least part of the oil flow-