

The Address—Mr. Dupras

attachment for this institution. I soon discovered how quickly we develop a sense of solidarity toward one another, regardless of party line, and it is with this in mind that I make my contribution this evening. I would like to believe that my views and ambitions are shared by the majority of hon. members. I know, also, that I might risk offending some of my electors if the comments that I make are anything like the ones that I heard the other day.

This brings me to the question of how people reacted when they read the speech that the newly elected hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) delivered to the House the other day. It was not very inspiring. I imagine that he is much more interested in what the newspapers had to write about him than what his electors may think of him. This emphasizes the wisdom of the delegates at the Quebec Liberal convention when they denied him the leadership of the party.

A great deal was made of the film produced by the Liberal party and used during the last campaign. The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe mentioned that the stars in the film were three doves and one or two sparrows. Some people have no talent for posing. Some people even observed that we did not have a peacock in the film.

• (2040)

[Translation]

In his remarks on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) asked among other things, whether the province of Quebec and the Atlantic provinces found the Trudeau government satisfactory after four and a half years in office. I cannot help but being astonished by such a question when the number of Liberal members from these provinces has increased at the last election. This shows without any doubt the support enjoyed by the government of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and its politic and constitutes of course a clear and obvious statement of appreciation. Therefore, the question of the Leader of the Official Opposition is not even justified.

Among other things, the Leader of the Official Opposition gave a gloomy picture of our economy by reminding us of the latest available figures which show that more than 600,000 Canadians are jobless or supposedly unemployed. This is far from the record number registered in the province of Quebec in 1960 under the last Progressive Conservative government when unemployment reached 10.1 per cent. What he failed to say or did not want to say is that our economic performance is expected to make of 1972 a record year in terms of gross national product, bank savings, wheat sales, export, the effects of which we can see every day.

He should also have told us that our gross national product has, for the first time, exceeded \$100 billion this year and this represents an 11 per cent increase over 1971.

He also failed to state that consumers have been spending much more and that in spite of this they have saved more. The purchase of durable goods has been stimulated mainly by the building of new homes which will reach this year an all-time high with slightly over 240,000 units.

[Mr. Dupras.]

Furthermore, our economic indicators are showing an all-time percentage increase, and I quote some examples as published in the excellent monthly publication of the Provincial Bank of Canada.

In retail sales, we are showing an increase of 14.1 per cent over the first eight months of last year; in exports, an increase of 10.7 per cent over ten months; in imports, 20.3 per cent, again over ten months; in housing starts, an increase of 7.5 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we are quite far from the dramatic situation described by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Suffice to mention, for example, the record sales disclosed by the large chain stores during the last holiday period, figures which reveal unheard of results concerning the sales increase registered by these stores during this period. This prosperity, Mr. Speaker, is found in all areas.

You could read in a weekend magazine that each Canadian had spent more than any other citizen of any other industrialized country in 1970 for international travel—\$68. In second place came the Swedes who spent \$62 while the Americans, for the information of hon. members, spent only \$20.

For a population of slightly over 20 million people, Mr. Speaker, we are certainly, percentage-wise among the most numerous people in the major tourist centres around the world, be it in the Alps, in the South Seas, in the Southern United States or Central Europe.

One has only to remember that when the Russian hockey team came to Canada, very few Russian citizens accompanied their team, while no less than 3500 Canadians—from an alleged slow growth country—accompanied Team Canada to root for them. This, Mr. Speaker, is another proof of the tremendous buoyancy of the Canadian economy which provides every Canadian with a standard of living higher than the standard of most industrialized countries in the world.

While really satisfactory, such a performance, Mr. Speaker, does not keep us from looking toward the future and from attempting, through new mechanisms, to improve on a continuous basis the living conditions of all Canadians, western Canadians and eastern Canadians alike.

Upon reading the Speech from the Throne I cannot but be pleased about the great many measures to be found in it, which will be brought before the House next week in order to bring amendments to measures already foreseen, to clarify others already initiated that can now be carried out.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) informed us in his speech of last Thursday of some new projects to reopen the file in the federal-provincial field of social affairs. Such measures are the results of much thought on the part of the minister and the care he brought to the consideration of these projects permits us to believe that they will come up to the expectation of the various provinces with a view to assuring the welfare of the people concerned in these programs.

Some steps are already being taken, for instance additional credits have been authorized for LIP projects as well as for training on the job programs. Those two programs have received unanimous acceptance and approval