

*The Address—Mr. Blais*

good sample of the agricultural community which exists both in Quebec and Canada. That is something I am proud of. There are in my riding some sixty municipalities, which is rather exceptional, for none of them is of significant size. The largest one has a population of only 14,000, which is relatively small. That is why there are as much as sixty of them. I have just been awarded two more for the next election. These communities boast many small and medium-size businesses which were hard hit by the 1981 recession whose effects continue to be felt. It will take quite some time before small businessmen regain confidence in the future. As the government, it is our duty to help them regain this confidence, and I suggest that the economic statement of the Minister of Finance has provided the basis for a new social contract both with the private sector and with the Canadian people as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, we feel that our sincere desire to see the private sector regain its legitimate role as the driving force of the economy will help these small and medium-size businesses in Bellechasse, in the Province of Quebec and throughout Canada get back to work with renewed courage. We believe that is a prerequisite to job creation. In this way, our productivity will be gradually increased and, thanks to the firms which have not been afraid to invest in research—there are many of them, both in my own riding and elsewhere—new export markets and long awaited permanent jobs will be created by this new approach and not, as in the past, by this increasingly encroaching government intervention in the lives of the Canadian people.

The Canadian people, Mr. Speaker, needed a breather and took it.

For over a year, I travelled extensively in the Bellechasse constituency and in the province of Quebec and I intend to travel also elsewhere in Canada including in the Capilano riding of which we were given a glimpse a moment ago.

I was able to meet our people and hear their complaints. They were dismayed at the attitude of the government and their leaders towards provincial governments. People everywhere noted the deep financial problems facing the Canadian government and felt that no effort was made to find a real solution.

However, Mr. Speaker, as stated in the Bible: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." On the morning of September 5, we said: "All of that is going to change."

The policies and directions announced in the Throne Speech by the Right Hon. Prime Minister and the financial statement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) are an indication to Canadians of the sincere effort and the very difficult exercise performed by the members of the government to cut the fat, out to use a colloquial expression, and reduce considerable government expenditures.

Such exercise was not easy but it was necessary if we want to give back to Canada its true place under the sun and more especially gain real credibility abroad and in our relations with other government levels.

After the statement of the Minister of Finance, the Canadian people might have expected all Hon. Members without exception to praise such a demonstration of courage and determination. Unfortunately, that is not what we got. We heard complaints and witnessed a defeatist attitude with respect to the constructive and sincere proposals made by the Government.

Mr. Speaker, when I am through with my speech in a few minutes, I will already have recorded a better performance than my predecessor, to a certain extent. Quite a few people still remember the Hon. Member who represented the riding of Bellechasse until 1980, the gentleman who belonged to the Social Credit Party, but fewer people can remember my predecessor. His personal record will be beaten when I end my remarks, Your Honour, I mean Mr. Speaker—I am still conditioned by my profession, although I had every intention of being careful about it.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the people of Bellechasse were quite anxious to have a spokesman to represent them properly in the House of Commons.

In conclusion, the Members from Quebec, including myself, want to assure all their parliamentary colleagues that we will fully support the approach of the Government aimed at checking the spending sprees to which we had become used to, as well as the courageous efforts made by the Government in the coming weeks to make sure that the Canadian Government will at last live within its means.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Any questions or comments on the remarks of the Hon. Member for Bellechasse?

● (1220)

[English]

Very well. We will proceed with debate.

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I want to compliment the mover, the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. James), and the seconder, the Hon. Member for Montreal-Mercier (Ms. Jacques), on the speeches with which they commenced the debate.

I want to express my congratulations to the Speaker on being appointed to this high and important position.

I also want to indicate my appreciation to the electors of Algoma for re-electing me to this House of Commons. It is a great and historic riding, once represented by the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson for some 19 years. It has shown its outstanding wisdom by re-electing a Liberal to this Thirty-third Parlia-