

we have become accustomed from Senator Choquette, as Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Senator Grosart: I doubt if you will.

Senator Desruisseaux: Well, at any rate, that is how I feel about it. I know many others feel the same way. But I welcome very much Senator Grosart as the new Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It can truly be said that his reputation as an excellent debater has preceded him. I congratulate him on the assumption of his new duties.

The Senate is fortunate indeed in being able to count amongst its members two new distinguished colleagues, Senator Barrow and Senator Cottreau. I fully concur in the remarks made by those who have already spoken in this debate about their being summoned to the Senate. Their contributions here will be highly valuable. I congratulate them and I wish them both a long and fruitful career.

● (1420)

I am sorry I was not present when tributes were paid to a recently deceased colleague. I mourn the passing of this personal friend, a most distinguished, able and esteemed colleague, the Honourable Romuald Bourque. His lifelong contributions to his city, to his province and to his country are his best eulogy. His wise and timely advice, his counsel, his broadness of view, his love for peace and good understanding, will remain in our memories. We regret the passing of this friend and I join in expressing to his family our sorrow and our very deepest sympathies.

The proposer and seconder of the motion for an Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, Senator Neiman and Senator Cottreau, made excellent presentations. They are to be commended for their clarity and their comprehensibility. They made valuable contributions indeed and their views were most refreshing. I congratulate them and hope they have a long life with us.

A Throne Speech announcing some 68 pieces of legislative projects, in addition to many projects which we have been advised will originate in the Senate, proposed without duress or pressures from any quarter, without fear of losing support that would cause harm and damage, presented in simple, concise language, was invigorating indeed. Policies can now be said to be the policies of the majority government. It can be backed up by the guarantee of a stable Parliament. It is, I think, the opportunity to streamline many of our legislative projects and many of our laws.

I want to congratulate the new Leader of the Government and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for their remarkable speeches yesterday. It augurs well for us and for a most interesting session. The verdict of the people of Canada is clear. My interpretation is that we witnessed with the election the rejection of any policy of total socialism, of interference in everything, and of controls of wages and prices. In my opinion it was the unconditional approval of our free enterprise system.

[Translation]

Perhaps at the risk of overtaxing your patience, but owing to their importance and our concern under the circumstances, I will take the liberty of dealing desultorily with certain points of our economy.

First let us say that a recent review of assessments made by government and bank economists indicate that our economy can be favourably compared with that of other industrialized countries and has very little to envy them.

In short, the real net increase of the Gross National Product during the current year can reach approximately 4 to 5 per cent and that being so, we rank among the most prosperous countries. Even if for 1975 only a 1.2 per cent increase in the constant strength of the domestic demand is expected, it is anticipated however, in spite of weak spots, that it will nevertheless rise from 4½ to 5 per cent in 1975. The housing requirements which also, in spite of a small decline, will perhaps exceed in 1974 the record year of 1973 still provide for 1975 some appreciable results, thanks to the measures announced in the Speech from the Throne, since only 10 per cent slump is expected in comparison with the record year of 1974. In addition, larger investments for industrial equipment and facilities which have not been cancelled up to now will largely compensate for overly generous estimates of foreign demand for our products which at the present time is receding and should be watched but which should begin its upward trend in mid-1975.

The effects of the higher cost of imported oil will not be as severe in Canada as in most other importing countries as it will be compensated for to a large extent by the higher cost of our own exports. In the first six months of 1974, we exported about two billion dollars' worth of oil to the U.S.A.; that is twice as much as in 1973 in the corresponding period. Forecasts for 1975 and 1976 are even more promising. That is definitely not a contributing factor in the depression foreseen in pessimistic milieux.

Economic forecasts indicate a marked deceleration in the purchase of Canadian goods by importing countries affected economically. We will have to excel in our external relations for our exports to resume their rising course. We will see a softening in the export of our food products, because of decimated reserves, the result of some of our crops and the increasing value of the Canadian dollar on foreign markets.

Our economic statistics also indicate a new surge in our imports which doubtless should be watched closely. Keeping in mind those factors, our economists still foresee somewhat lower employment, though stable, in the next few months. However, 1975 does not offer that guarantee. The weakness of the American and international economy is a source of serious concern to us, and far from reassuring. We have witnessed in recent months the swift movement of the great purchasing powers of our industrialized countries.

It is an important historical exodus and it will have consequences in the foreseeable future of the economy of all industrialized nations. I cannot share the view expressed recently that our economy will expand by only 1.2 per cent in 1975, in real net terms, and that our unemployment rate will reach an average of 7.8 per cent. I think that on the whole, factors indicate rather that there will be a decline only during the first three months of 1975 and that after a brief period of stagnation, the economy will regain a strong momentum in the later part of 1975, to continue progressively in the next few years. For its initial recovery, the Canadian economy will rely on outlays