

The Address

It is not just for my party here in the House, but for every party, regardless of political stripe. Let us all get one sight in our mind and that is to make this a better Canada and make it a place where we are proud to go back on the streets or back to our constituencies and say: "I am a member of Parliament and I am proud of that". What a change that would be. Keep on marching.

• (1910)

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, I too wish to congratulate you on your election. I am proud to represent the riding of Peterborough.

[English]

I do not know how many members, like me, are relishing this evening. I have been observing what has been happening over the last two or three days. Members will notice that the light seems to have changed. The mood has become quieter and the debate, in the middle of this discussion about the tragic economic problems we have and about the future of this great country, has become much more personal.

We have begun to exchange information about our ridings so that we can learn a little about where we come from. We have begun to exchange information about ourselves. The hon. member for Beaver River told us about her recent marriage, for example.

It seems to me perhaps it is on occasions like this and not when the media gallery is full that some of the key things of a Parliament like this are actually done.

My riding of Peterborough is often thought of as a microcosm of the province of Ontario, a bit in the way that Lac-Saint-Jean is a microcosm or special place in the province of Quebec. It is a riding that has been very hard hit by the recession. It is a riding that has great cultural and economic strengths and so it is a riding that has a great deal of hope. I would like members opposite, in particular, to know that.

As for myself, as quite a number of people indicated today, I am also an immigrant. I was not born in Canada. In fact my family is from Wales. Hon. members might be interested to know that the Welsh language is much older than French or English. It is at least 3,000 years old and has changed very little even though it is very vital today. Its culture is very strong. Six hundred thousand people speak the language in a tiny country. They are very proud of their heritage. I am very proud of that heritage just as I am very proud to be a Canadian and to represent Peterborough.

The debate today is about the revitalization of our economy and the future of Canada. I would like all members to know that even in this deep recession when the people of Peterborough are

really hurting their mandate to me was to revitalize the economy within an even stronger Canada. That is what I intend to do.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I heard with interest the comments of our hon. colleague from Beaver River. I remember the days in the last session when I was sitting on the other side of the House and the several times we had an opportunity to speak to each other on an informal basis as members do.

I would not want Canadians to think it is only with the advent of this Parliament that members have been friendly to each other across party lines. They have had the opportunity of knowing and assisting each other notwithstanding that they may have disagreed on policy or otherwise.

I want to congratulate the hon. member on her recent marriage. I wish her and her husband the best.

• (1915)

I have a question for the hon. member about the issues of recall and that of free votes. I am a fervent believer in increasing the number of free votes. Indeed the mother of Parliaments has considerably more free votes than we do. Government bills are often defeated by government members and the government does not fall automatically or an election is not called. We have twisted that convention very badly out of shape in Canada throughout the years.

By increasing the free votes we also increase, in my opinion, the influence of those who lobby parliamentarians. Quite often the fraternity we have, for lack of a better word, keeps us together and to a degree fends off the influence of lobbyists.

Would the member not agree with me that together with increasing free votes we have to increase the rules governing lobbyists and the registration of lobbyists in Canada?

Finally I would like to ask our colleague as well about recall and to give an opinion on that. Her and I are going to have to disagree on that one. I believe I was elected to make decisions on behalf of my constituents. I am to stand before them at the next election having had their opinions in mind all of the time. I must stand not just on one issue but on my overall performance as an MP and let them judge me at the next election. After all, I probably voted against the majority of my constituents on such things as abortion, and probably similarly on such things as capital punishment, and I was returned here with a relatively comfortable majority.

I believe very much in the Edmund Burke philosophy in that regard, that once elected you are a member for your constituency and for the country as a whole. You must stand on your record. If you do not do that you will always only represent the majority and never the minority within your own constituency.