

*The Address—Mr. Arsenault*

The cause of this evil is that, in seeking to promote the development of eastern Quebec, emphasis has been laid chiefly on the agricultural angle. No attempt was made to integrate in our economy the necessary share of related industrial developments. The consequence of this mistake has been that, since there were no markets for our agricultural production, it has been impossible to deter our young men from the ever enticing appeal of an easy life in the cities. The development of industry, of our mines, our forests and our fisheries has been neglected, as well as the decentralization of industries centred around great cities in order to open nearby markets to our complementary agricultural production. There has been failure to provide the farmers of my area with adequate cold-storage facilities for the conservation of their green vegetables. Yet, the natural resources, the vast forests and the mines of the Gaspé peninsula, and its oil prospects should have led to the conclusion that full development was necessary. No solution has been forthcoming to our purely local problems. If, at least, the fiscal rights of the provinces had been respected, I am sure that this gap would have been filled long ago.

One of the main natural resources of the Gaspé peninsula is the forest. In my own constituency, millions of cords of wood are going to waste, with the consequent loss to the county of millions of dollars in revenue. Instead of marketing thousands of tons of paper or millions of feet of lumber, we are still content with spending millions of dollars in fighting insect damage in forests which are too old and which should have been properly cultivated. In the first place we should therefore heed the advice of experts especially when they point out the basic causes of the depression in the lumber industry and of the loss of national or international markets. We must also call upon the knowledge of economists to ensure better prospects for our lumber markets.

These markets will be improved by better means of transportation.

It would be a good thing if our seaways were kept open all year round in eastern Quebec, even as far up as the port of Quebec. The operation of a few ice breakers during the four winter months could well ensure uninterrupted shipping on the St. Lawrence. Business men could then take an interest in developing our natural resources and would thus pay into the treasury the taxes required for the implementation of social welfare legislation. Railways and sections of the Trans-Canada highway should also contribute to our economic expansion while making a necessary contribution to the defence of this vulnerable part of our country.

[Mr. Arsenault.]

I should like to point out here the urgent necessity of providing the area of the Gaspé peninsula and that of the north shore of the St. Lawrence with railways which would promote the development of mining and forest industries.

I know that under this Conservative administration, the Prime Minister and the members of his cabinet will do their utmost to remove the difficulties which in the past have prevented the normal economic development of the eastern part of our country.

These few suggestions which a Canadian observer has been allowed to offer to this distinguished audience representing all parts of Canada would be pointless if they were not intended for a real Canadian of the highest distinction, that is the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

On behalf of all my constituents, I am glad to congratulate him for his accession to the function of Prime Minister of Canada. It is neither due to mere chance, nor the result of pure electoral conventions if a people such as ours chose him to guide its destinies: it is because he deserved it on all counts.

A professional man, a lawyer of great reputation, whose character enhances all his deeds, an untiring worker, he has, ever since he has represented Lake Centre and Prince Albert constituencies in this house, managed to earn the respect of the élite of all the people of Canada. The present Prime Minister of Canada rightly deserves the confidence, the respect and the admiration of the whole country.

Three months only of his present term of office have earned for this great statesman the highest praise and honours of a press which always keeps a watchful eye on the doings of those who hold high political office. When he takes part in discussions, whether it be in London, with the Commonwealth prime ministers, whether it be with the diplomats of the great American republic, or at the table of the United Nations, the right hon. Prime Minister commands attention by the loftiness of his views and the accuracy of his predictions.

All those qualities are manifest, beyond any doubt, in the plans outlined in the speech from the throne.

This house will be called upon to deal with matters which are both national and international in their scope.

In the international sphere, the preparation of a Commonwealth conference is expected, as well as the carrying on of the Colombo Plan, the active participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the co-operation promised to the United Nations.