

The Address—Mr. Balcer

us and that all the laudatory remarks written about you in newspapers since your appointment have been heartily applauded by members of the house. Being a French Canadian, I am happy that once again the tradition of alternating between an English-speaking Speaker and a French-speaking Speaker has been followed. While we are on this subject, I wonder if it would not be appropriate to suggest that when the time comes to choose a successor to the present governor general the same rule be applied and that a French Canadian be appointed Governor General of Canada to succeed the present incumbent. I would even suggest that the present Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) be designated as a possible successor.

I wish to congratulate quite sincerely the mover (Mr. Hollingworth) and the seconder (Mr. Villeneuve) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. I do not approve of everything they have said, but I heartily applaud the manner in which they have delivered their speeches.

According to tradition, the debate on the address enables members to set forth the needs of their constituency. As a matter of fact, the rules have been rather broad in connection with that debate and every member is free to vie with others in praising his constituents and making their needs known. Tonight, I would like to avail myself of that opportunity and say something about my constituency.

Three Rivers is the third largest city of the province of Quebec; it is a paper-making centre known the world over; but it is primarily a seaport. Besides, Three Rivers is, together with the seaport of Vancouver, particularly remarkable in that they are the only two ports under the authority of the national harbours board which have succeeded during the past years in making both ends meet and in bringing revenue to the board. Unfortunately, the board refused to acknowledge this success inasmuch as the port of Three Rivers is concerned and Three Rivers has always been treated niggardly but it is a good thing that lately the national harbours board came to the decision to construct a shed at a cost of approximately \$350,000, which will be a great improvement. I hope that that is only a beginning and that the necessary wharves will be constructed, and that the representations of the Three Rivers

city council about the ferry boat wharves will be taken into serious consideration. At present, we are experiencing a lot of trouble with the ferry between Three Rivers and Ste. Angele. The system is so inadequate that one has to wait from three to four hours before being able to make the trip. And for this reason the national harbours board should improve the wharf at Three Rivers so that this city may become a modern port such as its geographical location would call for.

We have to face a large number of problems, but the number one problem undoubtedly is the joining of the north and south shores, by means of a bridge between Three Rivers and Ste. Angele in the county of Nicolet. This would help not only the city of Three Rivers, but all the cities in the district which are hampered by the lack of communications between the two shores. As a matter of fact, the whole central part of the province suffers from this state of affairs. It finds itself, because of that fact, in a state of economic inferiority. In any event the point is that we should thus join two economic regions which are perfectly complementary. We have, on the one hand, the St. Maurice valley, with the cities and towns of Three Rivers, Shawinigan, Cap de la Madeleine, Grand-Mere, all busy little towns with a varied production and depending to a large extent on the south shore. On the other hand, on the south shore we find Nicolet, Victoriaville, Drummondville, Thetford Mines, Asbestos, Sherbrooke, which also depend upon this crossing over the St. Lawrence. That is why I ask the federal government to do its share, for it is a large-scale national undertaking.

The federal government collects a large proportion of the taxes. At the present time, it collects 77 per cent of the taxes so that there remains very little for the provinces and municipalities. The latter are in a precarious position, for real estate in the small towns cannot be taxed any more than it is now. Consequently, cities and municipalities hesitate before embarking upon large-scale projects.

Of course, the federal government cannot be asked to take charge of all public works in every municipality of a given province, but when it is a case of works benefiting a whole district, of works benefiting a whole province, as is the case now, I think that the federal