

The Address

will begin. Erie riding has a substantial urban aboriginal population and I look forward to learning how self-government will impact on this community.

As I sit in this Chamber among my colleagues I realize that despite political affiliation we also have the same goals of doing the best job possible for the constituency. Many great members have come and gone before us with similar ambitions. I salute all of those who have come to this place to represent Canadians. As we all know, it is not an easy task.

A great man once stood in this House and in his maiden address said: "I suggest that the time has come for action. We have a tremendous opportunity—the people of Canada look to us; the people of Canada trust in us; the people of Canada are counting on us; in heaven's name, let us not fail them". That man, a predecessor to the free spirits who now sit in this House, was Mr. Tommy Douglas. Mr. Douglas had a vision of a new Canada. I hope that within ourselves each of us also has a vision.

It is fitting to begin this Parliament at the start of a new year for this is the time when resolutions are made. In a recent letter received from Rural Dignity of Canada there was a quote from a 4-H publication. It reads: "May the thoughts in our heads blend with the compassion in our hearts, to guide our hands as they safeguard the health of those things we care most for: our loved ones, our communities and our world, throughout the coming year".

I encourage members to keep these thoughts in mind and in action in the months and years to come as we work for Canadians everywhere, as we work for a strong and united Canada. And when at some unknown future time we leave this Chamber for the final time we can proudly hold our heads high and each of us will be able to say: "I made a difference".

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Madam Speaker, I am happy to see that some of our friends opposite do care about what is going on in their ridings and are committed to standing up for their constituents.

They can join us in so doing, as we are here to look after the interests of Quebecers. Welcome, sir. Join the club.

• (1130)

I would also like to take this opportunity to tell the hon. member that our regions as well are faced with major problems, which we certainly intend to bring up over and over again. In my riding for example, the previous government shut down the CBC station which provided a vital link within the community. So, I will take every opportunity to remind this House of what a vicious deed this was, as regions can no longer make themselves

heard from government because of the lack of communication. I will make this point every time I rise in this House until the CBC and the new government get the message that regions must be given the means to communicate again, first among themselves, and then with the rest of the country, from coast to coast.

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, dear colleagues, I am pleasantly surprised to see the strong interest shown by the hon. member for his riding, since I represent the constituency of Abitibi, which may not be as beautiful as the hon. member's riding, but which, for me, is nevertheless the nicest one.

The people in the riding of Abitibi, possibly the largest one in Canada after the Northwest Territories, managed from the very beginning, early in the twentieth century, to clear the land and develop agriculture. It is through their daily efforts that these people were able to develop this region which is not as old as that of the hon. member, but of which I am very proud.

I am also pleasantly surprised to see that some members of this House have large families. I personally have seven children. Therefore, I believe that the future of our children must be the top priority for Canada as well as for Quebec.

I want to emphasize the problems which I experienced during the election campaign in my riding of Abitibi, where regional development is so important. I am not referring to problems linked to facing an opponent but, rather, to the difficulty of meeting people and listening to their concerns, which have to do with finding work, for example in the case of workers who have to rely on social assistance and who, at fifty years of age, are losing hope of finding a new job.

I am honoured to rise for the first time in the House and I want to take this opportunity to discuss the problems which exist in my riding and to ask you, the government members, the Liberal government, to listen to people in all those ridings who expect you to succeed in your endeavours. It is a fact that we, on this side of the House, will take a close look at your legislation. If you table good bills we will certainly support them, and the Reform Party members have also said they will: if it is good legislation, we will not purposely criticize it. On the contrary, we will support it.

But you can be sure that people in my riding, who elected me to represent them in this House, want Canada to do better, regardless of the decision they will have to make in the next few years.

I want to tell the hon. member for Erie that goods and services in this country are traded between provinces. In our family business we would routinely, as wholesalers, buy products from your region, whether it was fruits or vegetables. We have to learn to accept each other's choices.