

The Address—Mr. Marceau

I take the liberty at this stage of mentioning all the hopes which were raised by the establishment of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and of expressing on behalf of the people, the confidence placed in its head, the Hon. Jean Marchand, whose competence has been recognized for some time now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Marceau: 2. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, subsidies ought to be granted to transportation companies, so as to make it possible for the products of our area to compete on the outside market.

3. Finally, one of the hopes of my people, in order to get over the serious economic difficulties they are facing, is to see our northern natural resources being developed and it is essential that access roads be built at once to James Bay with a view to developing the forest, mining and power resources available to us.

Such a project has been developed under the name of the "Vermilion Crescent" and it deserves the encouragement of the federal government through every means available.

In order to settle our economic problems, a body known as the Regional Economic Council has been set up in our area which is a valuable intermediary. I do think that through consultations with that agency, the government will be able to find quick and efficient solutions.

As I remember an expression which I heard somewhere: "man misses an opportunity rather than lack for one", I would feel remiss in my duty if I did not take now the opportunity to clear up a misinterpretation of the attitude and the behaviour of the people in my area.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said:

Freedom would soon be but an idle word, were it to leave without any control those who wield power. Endless vigilance is the price of freedom. A nation eager to preserve its freedom should be Argus-eyed and always on the alert. Should it be caught off guard or weakened, every second of idleness will cost it a bit of its rights".

The people in the Saguenay area remember those famous words which serve them as a constant reminder. They are ready to fight and resort to all reasonable and legal means in order to preserve their freedom and identity.

Indeed as Rev. Lionel Groulx, the famous historian, said a long time ago:

If French-speaking Canadians owe their country some special cultural duty or service, it is clear that it is neither as half-English nor as half-

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French that they will be of any use, except by admitting but one attitude on their part, that is to be fully themselves.

It is only normal to expect to find, in an area of this country inhabited by forward-looking French-speaking Canadians, a real and sincere alertness and awareness from those who are ready to co-operate, provided they are considered as first-class citizens.

It is undeniable that our people will no longer be satisfied with promises or even with efforts that will not give actual results.

While recognizing, of course, that there are extremists, I assert with certainty that they are not the majority and I say that many of them do not act in bad faith but are insufficiently informed, and the representatives of the people are very often to blame for that.

Besides, it is not for me to judge individuals since they are entitled to their personal opinions in so far as they do not conflict with the public interest.

In that part of the country where I live, 500 miles from Ottawa, there is a sound nationalist, that is not the kind which seeks to destroy and will not co-operate, but the kind which is much more preferable, the one that is identified with the conscious and constant effort of a consistent group which is irrevocably decided to assert its own identity and to make, as such, a real contribution to the whole of Canada.

In short, the spirit which inhabits my fellow-citizens as well as the great majority of French-speaking Canadians is that of an enthusiastic participation, but as equal partners, to the building of a Canada that could be the living and permanent representation of the two founding peoples.

Mr. Speaker, the people to whom I belong have achieved a degree of maturity that will enable them to make a choice inspired by reason and common sense and to check the emotional feelings that might cloud their judgment and jeopardize their safety and welfare.

It is obvious that the French-speaking Canadians of today are much nearer to reality while fully aware of the sacrifices made necessary by this new understanding. While ready to do their best in order to avoid splitting up and dividing Canada, they are also, more than ever, prepared to insure their survival and their fulfilment, whatever the price may be, were they to fail in securing, once and for all equal status and the acknowledgment of their rights, not only in theory but also in practice.