

The Address—Mr. D. J. MacDonald

the diplomacy with which you have carried out your very difficult duties. I am certainly happy that hon. members saw fit to re-elect you, and also the Deputy Speaker to preside over this new session. I offer you both my best wishes.

● (2140)

In my maiden speech in this House last year I said I was very honoured that the people of Cardigan elected me as their representative in Ottawa. It is now over a year since they gave me that privilege, and I must say that I find it more and more challenging and interesting to work on behalf of the people of Cardigan as time goes by. They have continued to show their complete support for whatever I have endeavoured to do for them. I think I can say in all fairness that they appreciate what has been done for them during the past 16 months. Needless to say, I look forward to many more months and years of working on behalf of those who elected me.

As hon. members know, last year marked the one hundredth anniversary of Prince Edward Island's entry into confederation. Although the seeds of confederation were planted in Charlottetown in 1864 and the dream became a reality in 1867, reluctant islanders waited another five years before finally joining confederation in 1873. Of course, we were extremely proud and happy to celebrate all three of those centennials with equal vigour and enthusiasm. In 1973, Canadians from all over the country joined islanders in celebrating their anniversary. The former Governor General and Mrs. Michener officially opened the celebrations on January 1, 1973. From then on it was a year of festivities and of various events to commemorate the historic occasion. We were particularly honoured that Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip could join with us in celebrating the centennial. This was certainly one of the highlights of an exciting year. For me the occasion was all the more memorable because Her Majesty spent a considerable amount of time in my riding of Cardigan.

We were also privileged to have the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the federal cabinet pay a visit to the island and hold a cabinet meeting in the historic Confederation Chamber at Province House. This was the first time the federal cabinet had met in Charlottetown since confederation. Needless to say, I was particularly proud to take part in that historic event. I wish to take advantage of this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express, on behalf of all islanders, our most sincere thanks to all hon. members, and indeed to all Canadians who came to the island and joined with us in celebrating our memorable anniversary. I am sure that the hospitality and the friendliness with which you were greeted will prompt you to come again as often as possible.

Hon. members will recall that a comprehensive development plan for the island was signed in March, 1969. I will not go into the details of the plan as I am sure hon. members are familiar with it. However, I would like to point out that since the implementation of the plan, the number of people leaving the island has declined substantially to the point where we now have a real population growth on the island. This means that a whole new generation of young people can find interesting and challenging

opportunities on the island instead of having to move to other parts of Canada or to the United States.

I should also point out that the numerous DREE projects which have been, and continue to be, approved for the island are of tremendous help to our economic development. I think the decentralization program that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) is now carrying on for his department will make it still more effective.

Another point that I should like to mention about development is that although we are looking forward to a fairer degree of economic development which would continue to offer our younger generation better opportunities for work, at the same time we are also looking at the quality of development that we want for our island. I do not think we are prepared to have development simply for the sake of development. We are also extremely concerned with the over-all environment of the island. We are becoming more and more aware of the fact that our geographical location puts us in a rather privileged position today. We realize that people from big cities envy us, and we would certainly want to try to avoid some of the mistakes they have made and perhaps belatedly regret. In other words, we are looking for a certain quality of development which will help us enjoy a reasonable standard of living but at the same time will help us keep and develop those environmental qualities which we still have and which have become so precious today.

In the agricultural sector, some of the programs related to the development plan helped island farmers enjoy a particularly good year in 1973. I am pleased to note that the Speech from the Throne speaks of a number of measures which will continue to help the farmer produce in greater quantity and quality so that we can achieve stabilization of food prices. In that respect I think the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has demonstrated great leadership and is moving in the right direction.

Island fishermen have also shared in this prosperity with good catches and increased earnings. The fishermen were extremely pleased with the compensation program for replacement of the gear they lost during a particularly severe storm. Some \$617,000 was received by 845 fishermen on the island in compensation for their heavy losses. This was approximately two-thirds of the total losses, and the provincial government reimbursed the fishermen for the remainder.

Another very important fisheries development in P.E.I. is the small harbours development program. Results of the 1973-74 supplementary program can already be seen, and \$335,000 was allocated to upgrade facilities at many of the island's small craft harbours. I am pleased to see that the Speech from the Throne refers to further "improvements in harbour facilities for fishing fleets." I think the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) and the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé) have shown great understanding of the fishermen's needs in this regard.

Even before confederation transportation was a major problem in Prince Edward Island. One of the terms of confederation was that there would be a continuous link with the mainland. Because of this promise the federal government remains continually abreast of the problem of transportation. At the present time, two ice-breaker fer-

[Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan).]