

The Address—Mr. Arsenault

me in this house not too many years ago and perhaps I may say before resuming my seat what he said to you:

If when I leave this house I can feel that I have made a friend of every one of you, I feel that these years have been worth while.

I think you will agree, that I can set no higher objective for myself.

With these rather rambling remarks, and expressing once again the pleasure that the occasion has been to me, it is my great pleasure to move, seconded by the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Arsenault):

That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen in the following words:

To The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty:—
Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada in parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the gracious speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both houses of parliament.

(Translation):

Mr. Neree Arsenault (Bonaventure): On this memorable occasion of the opening of the first session of a new federal government in our Canadian capital, Mr. Speaker, I am most appreciative of the tokens of esteem and confidence with which the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) has honoured me by asking me to second the address in reply to the speech from the throne. It is definite evidence of the right hon. Prime Minister's interest in the people of my riding, of the province of Quebec and of the whole of French Canada.

It is therefore with pride and gratitude that I second the address so ably moved by my colleague from Calgary South (Mr. Smith).

(Text):

It is a great honour for me to congratulate the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Smith) who gave in this House of Commons so magnificent a report on the speech from the throne. In so doing he honoured greatly his father who was formerly one of the most eminent members of the Conservative party. I understand how proud his riding of Calgary South is of him as its member.

(Translation):

The 40,000 Canadian citizens who make up the population of the constituency of Bonaventure join unanimously with me today in expressing their gratitude to the federal authorities. They are proud to be part of this Canadian people which has been so highly honoured this year by the presence among us of our gracious Queen.

In returning me as their member, in the last general election, my constituents put upon my shoulders the pleasant though neces-

sary duty of explaining to the house their present economic situation and their urgent needs.

The constituency of Bonaventure has an area of about 4,000 square miles, and its needs are similar to those of the neighbouring constituencies of Gaspé, Matapédia, Rimouski and Temiscouata. Together these five constituencies are larger in area than the province of New Brunswick.

It means that our Gaspé peninsula takes on the character of a province, and I hope that this small country of mine within Canada will soon enjoy under a Progressive Conservative government, the necessary economic development which will enable its people to share in the economic prosperity now enjoyed by the Canadian nation in general.

Statistics show that, in my constituency of Bonaventure, the standard of living is much lower than in constituencies bordering on industrial centres. While the Gaspé peninsula, which includes the constituency of Bonaventure, is the oldest part of this area, it has not prospered at the same rate as the country as a whole.

Over the past sixty-seven years my constituency has always been represented by Liberal members, and during all those years that part of the country has reaped neglect. And yet it lies at the very gates of a highly efficient river outlet, calculated to promote economic development, owing to the proximity of European and American markets. Unfortunately, none of our natural seaports, any more than our railway services were adequately developed.

Moreover, censuses bring out the striking fact that our population is decreasing. Instead of growing at the normal rate expected of a sturdy and hardy stock, our human capital is less than it was. Year after year, the percentage of the rural population is declining. Our agricultural organizations had hoped to prevent a second dispersal of our Acadian sons; alas, the exodus of young farmers and settlers who are forced to go elsewhere to earn a living is on the increase. How many boys and girls of my constituency have scattered all across the country and even across the border! They have not definitely quit their native village for they still hope that better conditions may allow them to return home.

I greet those thousands of Gaspésians on behalf of their brothers who are still awaiting their return. However, this evil which affects our Gaspésian population is not confined to eastern Quebec; its ravages extend as well to other parts of our province.