

Allow me to express once again my concern for the citizen as an individual. Allow me to suggest to the governments that they take time to consult and listen to the citizens and their institutions to get a better idea of where the priorities lie. Freeing the human spirit is the ultimate goal of all social activities. Creativity is at the very basis of all social achievement. The importance of human contribution to our decision-making process must be reaffirmed. That is the characteristic of a creative society and the aim I recommend to our leaders in all spheres of human activity.

● (2030)

[English]

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate you and Madam Speaker on your appointments to these very important positions in the House.

Since this is my maiden speech in the House of Commons, I would like first to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Peterborough riding for sending me to Ottawa as their representative. It is less than a year since I first entered federal politics and already I have been involved in two rather quick repetitive federal elections, quicker than I would like to have seen. However, I am grateful for the support I have received from my colleagues in the House. I am also grateful for the support that I have received from members opposite because it was due to their policies that I was able to gain this seat.

There are a number of reasons why I am proud to represent the constituency of Peterborough. Mine is only one of 282 ridings in the country, but all other constituencies would be hard pressed to match the physical beauty and the quality of the Kawarthas. With a population approaching approximately 100,000 people, Peterborough county is the gateway to the Kawartha Lakes, one of Canada's prime tourist attractions. Two-thirds of my constituents live in an urban environment and most of those are located in the beautiful city of Peterborough. Many of the remaining one-third farm some of the best agricultural land in Ontario.

Mine is a riding like few others in Canada because within a ten-minute drive of the huge General Electric plant in downtown Peterborough are some of Canada's best lakes, finest fishing and most beautiful parks. My riding is also one which realizes how essential it is to look after its young people. Our educational system is second to none and includes an excellent elementary and secondary school system as well as Sir Sanford Fleming College and Trent University. To the young people in my riding I send my sincere appreciation for their support in the past election.

The issues in Peterborough county are the same as in most ridings with a rural-urban population mix. More than 72 per cent of the homes in Peterborough county are owned by the occupants. That figure is well above the Canadian average of 62 per cent and the Ontario average of 63 per cent. As a result, many of my constituents are gravely concerned about the current levels of high interest rates.

The Address—Mr. Domm

Because of the Kawartha Lakes and the importance of tourism in the Peterborough area, environmental issues are also in the front rank. Two environmental issues in particular, acid rain and Eurasian milfoil, pose grave threats to my riding, as they do to other parts of Canada, including British Columbia. I will be directing many of my efforts in this House to these two areas, the economy and the environment.

In many ways Peterborough has been fortunate as Canada enters the 1980s. After several years in the economic doldrums during the mid-seventies Peterborough began to perk up in 1979, and last October unemployment hit a five-year low. Employment in the major industries, particularly at General Electric which employs over 4,500 people, has been very encouraging.

The people of Peterborough are also looking forward to the arrival in our city of the Parks Canada regional office from Cornwall. Although the new government has been reconsidering the move, economic common sense dictates that the transfer be carried through. It was work researched by the Liberal government and acted on by the Conservative Parliament. Because of its more central Ontario location, Peterborough riding is much better suited to serve the province of Ontario than the present location of the regional office in the southeast corner.

I remind hon. members that there seemed to be very little objection to the Quebec branch of Parks Canada moving out of Cornwall and going to Quebec. As well, to serve the interests of national unity and to meet the needs of the Francophone employees of Parks Canada office personnel, the two school boards in Peterborough county have already made plans to introduce Peterborough's first French-immersion program. All in all, it bodes rather well for the future of our country. At a time of the referendum vote I find it very encouraging that the government has seen fit to move Parks Canada to Peterborough, and Peterborough in turn has seen fit to introduce French immersion for the Francophones.

As a relative newcomer to the House I would not make my maiden speech without commenting upon impressions I gained during the short Thirty-first Parliament. Although our time in power was brief I feel we did accomplish a great deal. When the Progressive Conservative government of the Thirty-first Parliament is remembered and written about by the historians, it will be because of the two major issues of the 1980s, that is to say, energy and the economy. Perhaps our defeat on February 18 might be compared to the case of the patient who switches doctors because he does not like the diagnosis.

In hindsight many have said that we should not have introduced such a tough budget and that we should have offered more in the way of goodies. That may have been good politics but it would not have been what this country needed.

It is interesting that shortly after the February election, President Jimmy Carter announced massive changes in the 1980-1981 American budget. His proposals included plans for a ten cents a gallon excise tax on gasoline; spending cuts of some \$14 billion; a 20,000-person reduction in the civil service, and the first balanced budget in the United States—at least in