

Honourable senators, I want to say how proud I am to be among you. I am grateful for the warm welcome you gave me and I intend to show myself always worthy of such a distinguished company. I will try to emulate my predecessor from the electoral division of LaSalle, the lamented Senator Mark Drouin, a real gentleman whose charm was well known.

Honourable senators, the text of the Speech from the Throne which is before us is the logical result of the efforts made by the present Government since last April to give the Canadian economy a dynamic expansion, to bring a solution to the important problems of today, such as unemployment, trade, federal-provincial relations, social security and national unity.

During the last general election, the Government had made pledges to the Canadian people, as stated in the program which is now being implemented.

I have here a copy of this program and I should like to quote a few items to show you that those commitments are included in the Speech from the Throne or are already incorporated in legislative measures passed last session. I quote, for instance, page 7 of this program:

Equal partners in confederation. To ensure in Canada the equality of French and English languages and cultures.

You all know that a fact-finding commission has already been appointed and that it is now at work, that its presidents are visiting the various provinces of the country in order to reach a conclusion which should normally result in a better understanding of national unity.

A little further on, I read:

Complete elimination of disparity between the provinces in the yield of direct taxes.

This item appears almost word for word in the Speech from the Throne:

You will be asked to approve the changes in fiscal arrangements decided upon at the Federal-Provincial conference last November.

On the following page, I read:

Setting up of a federal department of Industry.

The Department will consider the necessary steps to take in order to promote economical manufacturing of new products in Canada.

You know that this department has been set up and that the Speech from the Throne

contains a measure aimed at expanding primary and secondary industries.

On the following page I read:

Loans for municipal services.

A commission has been established for that purpose and already more than \$4.5 million has been lent to municipalities to enable them to improve municipal services. This had the salutary effect of giving work in winter-time and also of decreasing the unemployment rate.

In the next page, we read the following:

Improvements to the National Housing Act.

It is not necessary to tell you what are the measures that will be considered in this connection.

Allow me simply to draw your attention to a measure taken last year which had the effect of granting a bonus to anyone wishing to become a homeowner this winter. You know that some 32,000 applications were accepted and granted. That is another measure which is bound to help check unemployment.

A little further, I read:

Setting up of a national economic council—designed to create new industries and provide for regional and community development—in order to provide the 250,000 new jobs needed by the country every year...

Statistics show that by mid-January 275,000 new jobs had been created. The same statistics show that unemployment declined by 75,000. Of course, we are not yet satisfied as regards the elimination of that plague affecting the country, but every effort is being made to achieve full employment.

On the following page, I read this:

Creation of a loan fund for students.

That item is almost textually announced in the Speech from the Throne.

A little further on, we find the following:

Federal contributory retirement fund.

There again we will have to consider legislation in view of establishing that federal contributory retirement fund.

On the next page, we also read this:

A minimum pension of \$75 a month to help those who have already retired...

That legislation has been applied since last October.