

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 6, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Before I call Orders of the Day, I thought it might interest the House to know that this is the one hundred and seventeenth anniversary of the first day of the first session of Parliament in 1867.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY, MOVED BY MR. KEN JAMES AND SECONDED
BY MS. CAROLE JACQUES

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, and members of his Cabinet, for affording me the privilege of moving the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I extend my profound respects to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada, the Hon. Jeanne Sauv .

I am taking the liberty of speaking for all Members of Parliament in extending to you, Mr. Speaker, our congratulations on your election to the post of Speaker of the House of Commons. We have every confidence in your ability and we know you bring to your position a true sense of dignity, honour and dedication. We wish you much success in this important milestone in your career, and know the residents of Don Valley West feel justification in the confidence they have placed in you since 1979.

To be invited to participate in the opening ceremonies and the opening days of the Thirty-third Parliament, and to be given the opportunity to deliver my maiden speech so early in my political career, is indeed an honour and one which I shall long remember. The constituents of the riding of Sarnia-Lambton can be assured that this honour has been extended not to me but to them because of the Prime Minister's realization of the importance of this region of southwestern Ontario.

Sarnia-Lambton consists of the Village of Point Edward, the Township of Moore, the Township of Sarnia and the City of Sarnia. I ask that each and every resident of this riding share this moment of pride with me.

Sarnia-Lambton is a riding which is tucked away in the extreme southwestern corner of the great Province of Ontario. It is a riding that is as diverse in its peoples as it is in its economic activity. The brochures call it "Bluewater Land". It is situated at the point where the most beautiful of the Great Lakes, Lake Huron, flows into the wide, beautiful and blue St. Clair River. Every week thousands of visitors pour across the Bluewater Bridge from the United States of America to do business, for recreation and for relaxation in this area. Sarnia-Lambton has grown far past its physical size in cosmopolitan stature because of its proximity to our American neighbours. We have dealt with Canada-United States relations since the mid-1800s and we are still thriving, demonstrating the firm bond which exists between Canada and our close friends, our American neighbours.

In contrast to the pleasant parks and clear waters, there also stands in Sarnia one of the largest refining and petrochemical areas in the country, in fact in the world. This is called the "Chemical Valley", a complex stretching for 15 miles or more. Over \$6 billion has been invested in oil refining and feedstock to petrochemical production facilities. Over one-third of the country's crude oil is refined in Sarnia-Lambton, and over one-half of the nation's petrochemicals are manufactured in Sarnia-Lambton. Thousands of jobs in other communities across the country, working in what is called the downstream end of the industry, depend on the refined and petrochemical products which are manufactured in the "Chemical Valley". This area plays a large part in the over-all economic future of the country. There are 14 major companies with refineries or petrochemicals plants in the "Chemical Valley" complex.

In terms of employment in the petrochemical industry, 14,600 people are working throughout the country, with 8,300 people working in Sarnia-Lambton alone. The Sarnia-Lambton petrochemical industry employs almost 57 per cent of the total workforce of the petrochemical industry.

● (1110)

Of late there have been problems plaguing the petrochemical industry, problems due to government regulation and policy which have increased taxation on our resources, in turn driving the cost to a point which affects the competitive situation versus the United States gulf coast petrochemical products production. These problems are not exclusive to the industry in Sarnia. The effects are felt by the producers of crude oil and natural gas in our western provinces and by the manufacturers of petrochemicals, both from the oil-based and natural gas feedstocks in all Canadian locations.

Our Government is now negotiating with all sides concerned. One year ago the industry said that this was impos-