

*The Address—Mr. Y. Leduc*

the savings banks of the province of Quebec to grant mortgage loans for the construction of houses. That new legislation does away, moreover, with the joint loans, replacing them by a system of insured mortgages through which the approved lender provides the whole amount instead of 75 per cent. Also, the maximum loan has been raised and the period of amortization lengthened from 20 to 25 years.

In this same field, we must applaud the conclusion of federal-provincial agreements with seven of the ten provinces, the greatest number of such agreements being with the province of Ontario where, according to a statement made in December last by the hon. Minister of Public Works, a large scale program of slum clearance and reconstruction has helped to change the face of Toronto. May Montreal follow that example and take advantage of that beneficent co-operation in order to overcome its problem of insufficient housing and overpopulated dwellings and to promote the disappearance of that social evil, the slum.

Another measure which has been comforting to many people is the act which has been adopted to help disabled persons and which came into effect on New Year's day. The governments of all provinces have announced their intention to sign an agreement with the federal government in order to improve the lot of this group of unfortunate people. That is another step toward greater co-operation between the federal government and that of my province, and I congratulate both of them. In this connection, it is a very pleasant duty for me to thank the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) and my excellent old friend, the member for Terrebonne (Mr. Bertrand), for the manner in which they upheld that noble and sympathetic cause.

The house has without doubt learned with marked rejoicing some time ago that during the present session the government intends to help more extensively our veterans through an amendment to the law respecting their allowances and to show a deeper understanding for one of the most unfortunate groups of our society, the blind, in lowering the age at which the allowance is granted and increasing the maximum provided by the act.

With no mental reservation and with no intention to link these last statements with the problem of federal-provincial relations in the matter of taxation, I should be remiss in my duty if I did not express the hope that light may be thrown on the way to a fair settlement that would bring satisfac-

tion to the taxpayers of the province of Quebec as well as to those of the other provinces.

The virtue of charity is not practised only within the borders of the nation. The Canadian government endeavours also to extend it to the international field. In fact, the Canadian contribution to the Colombo plan is intended mainly to help the economic and social improvement of the countries of south and southeast Asia.

To provide these countries with the means of improving and increasing their industrial and agricultural production, of extending their public and social services, of improving their administrative system by supplying them with materials, equipment, technicians, experts and administrators not only constitutes an undertaking of mutual assistance from which our country is the first to benefit in large measure but at the same time, if I am not mistaken, promotes the ideal of the free and democratic countries and increases their cohesive force.

Before concluding my remarks, I do feel compelled to mention the gigantic project undertaken recently, namely the deepening of the St. Lawrence seaway. There is no doubt that this 1,200-mile long seaway will greatly contribute to the economic development of our country. This happy undertaking, like other large public works which the government proposes to undertake, will stimulate industry, business and employment of labour. As a result of the building of canals, locks and even the development of power, our economic development will be much more rapid and unemployment will thereby come to an end. It will then be possible to ship, quickly and economically, to plants in the centre of the continent, millions of tons of ore mined in eastern Canada; it will be easier to move our wheat reserves to the various markets of the world, while decreasing the handling and shipping charges towards the east. The people of Montreal, Verdun and the surrounding communities will rejoice at the increase in business and activity in the harbour of our metropolis; it is said that this harbour will become an even more important link between ocean-going vessels and ships plying the great lakes.

The speech from the throne delivered by the governor general, which announces the introduction of certain bills, reflects the altruism of this government and its concern for its sister nations, the general economy of this country and the needs of all classes of our population. The amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act will certainly help those who might not be able to find em-