

their views and then we rise in the House to express them. Since 1962, the Social Credit members have joined ranks to form a team with the purpose of bringing the elected closer to the electors, of bringing the administrator closer to the administered and of seeing to it that democracy in our constituencies is really a living thing.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, we are so responsive that, as far as I am concerned, I intend to categorically oppose the adoption of this new electoral map by all parliamentary means at my disposal, as long as the government fails to understand the importance of giving members of all political parties the proper means to serve the population they represent. The people expect services from us and the government should give us the necessary tools to enable us to render these services. "Give us the tools and we will do the job" as our English power friends would say.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important point and, with regard to our parliamentary behaviour—at least mine—I would like to make clear to all my colleagues that, whatever the situation in the House, I am not here to topple the government, nor to protect it. I was elected in my constituency and my expenses were \$2,500, made up of quarters given to my electoral fund by workers. I was democratically elected and I intend to act freely. I thank my leader for allowing me to speak freely according to my conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that we have a minority government, because it shows that democracy is sound and that there is always room for a free member in the House, whether the government has a majority or not. This is the main thing.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have enough time to complete my comments even if many ideas come to my mind.

The government says that it wishes to create employment and to control pollution. I would like to remind the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé) that he should try to be more active than his predecessor and realize that the St. Lawrence, one of the great inland seas in the world, is completely polluted. It is a real disaster.

The government should revise its position and study the possibility of improving the shores of the St. Lawrence between Montreal and Quebec at least so that this natural resource of our country may be developed and freed from pollution.

Several fishermen all along the river have lost their jobs. The waterfront land in the municipalities of my constituency is being eroded. The highway has become a public danger because of landslides. However the government says: This is not a priority; there is nothing we can do. Yet, it has before built some supporting walls and some ports. So even if it were only to help these municipalities I do not see why the government would not revise its policy in this regard. It would then kill two birds with one stone: while fighting pollution and improving the river banks and the beauty of certain historic sites, it would contribute to the creation of jobs and would enable municipalities to carry out public works which have become an urgent necessity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your kindness and assure you of my co-operation in the future.

25714—25

The Address—Mr. Epp

[English]

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, let me join other hon. members in congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker of this House. Your concern for and consideration of freshmen members was known to me long before I had the honour to take my seat as a member of the House of Commons.

It is a singular honour for me to represent the historic riding of Provencher. Provencher was created at the time Manitoba became a province in 1870. The first member to be elected for Provencher was Louis Riel. It goes without saying that our first representative made a lasting contribution to western Canada and, more specifically, to Manitoba. Still, it is my hope that my fate as the representative for Provencher will not in any way parallel that of Louis Riel.

• (2120)

Provencher is a riding which is not typical of western Canada. The Canadian shield skirts the riding in the east and the north. We are the possessors of timber resources and mineral resources in these areas. We have been blessed with farmlands right across the constituency and we are a major supplier of agricultural products. Tourism, also, is making itself felt as an economic factor, and especially in the eastern section of our riding tourism is becoming a big thing. Nevertheless, regardless of other factors—and we welcome diversification—agriculture remains the backbone of the rural constituency of Provencher and agriculture is my major concern.

While our geography might not be as typical of Prairie ridings as might be expected, Provencher is typical of western Canada in one respect, and that is in its multicultural mosaic. We count French-Canadians, Ukrainians, Indians, Anglo-Saxons and Mennonites as major groups comprising the total population of our area. Added to these groups, Mr. Speaker, are many other nationalities which have given us the contribution of their culture. The hallmark of these people has been co-operation with each other. While we hear so much today of various interest groups, I submit that in western Canada we have learned to live together. A person should not be judged by his national background or the background of his forefathers but, rather, by the contribution he is willing to make to our country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp: We all have different backgrounds, but first we are Canadians. This is the country that gave our forefathers a new home. Hence, since taking my seat in this House, Mr. Speaker, I have been disturbed by the statements made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand). At a time when reason and understanding should prevail, they have taken it upon themselves, in an attempt to explain the losses they encountered at the polls on October 30, to suggest that these losses were due to an anti-French attitude held by many Canadians, specifically those of western Canada. As a western Canadian, I simply do not accept that criticism. Historically, it is not a correct statement that we have been anti-east or anti-French.