

*The Address—Mr. Berger*

not be exclusively restricted to bitter and intensive criticisms, because the economic and political stability of Canada is at stake.

[Text]

Before I go any further, Mr. Speaker, let me say how proud and happy I was to see that our leader, the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada did not leave to one of his French lieutenants the task of speaking before the whole nation on this party's policy toward national unity, but that he chose, rather, to express himself, in such a clear and brilliant way, his definition of real biculturalism and bilingualism in our great country. To judge by the warm reception his message was accorded on both sides of this house, the effort has not been in vain.

I am well aware, Mr. Speaker, that whenever I have the honour and opportunity to address myself to this distinguished assembly, however proud and conscious I am of my French origin, I must first express myself as a real and true Canadian. Most of my colleagues, along with myself, have been deeply shocked upon occasion by certain thoughtless and impolite remarks coming from a few irresponsible members opposite in their criticism of the speech from the throne. If I may express one very sincere wish, let us all become more realistic, weigh the facts, envisage solutions and get to work in earnest for the benefit of Canada, not just for personal ambitions and reprehensible covetousness. My province, the province of Quebec, along with all the other provinces, appreciates good and promising speeches. On the other hand, owing to our present economic awakening after a far too long and disastrous slumber for which we are probably the first to blame, our province wants action—definite action—and wants it now.

[Translation]

The present government has understood our legitimate aspirations, our wish to emancipate ourselves constantly in every field and at all levels, even if at times we express ourselves, I admit it, somewhat too violently. If we really want to check the dangerous extremist wave which is sweeping not only Quebec, but the whole country, the central government will have to do its part and it will be necessary to apply as soon as possible the formula of a co-operative federalism desired by everybody, that is one central government and 11 provincial governments, which will be equal partners in a new confederative pact which will be our own and will meet for a long time the present and future needs of the Canadian people made up of two great races enjoying equal recognition and enriched through the years by the precious contribution of lan-

[Mr. Berger.]

guages, cultures and other invaluable treasures of various ethnic groups who have joined us to become full Canadians.

This being said, Mr. Speaker, I would like now to speak, and I hope nobody will resent it, for the people in my own riding. In view of the legislation passed in the previous session and which will be proposed to us this session, it is only natural that my fellow Canadians in Montmagny-L'Islet should look forward to them and keep up their hopes. But as the Bible says, man does not live by bread alone and our people do not live either merely from hope. I will take this opportunity to give you some examples.

Despite my insistence and my direct interventions supported by all responsible organizations at home, we could not have our area designated to participate in the benefits granted to the underdeveloped areas in the special assistance to winter works. To do so, apparently took as a basis the statistics issued by the unemployment insurance offices. I, therefore, humbly suggest to the minister concerned to completely revise the standards or basis of such assessments, because the applications at the unemployment insurance offices are not at all in accordance with the economic situation in any given area and specially in a predominantly rural region like the one I have the honour to represent, where unemployment insurance, social assistance and welfare groups play a leading part. But I understand that our very efficient and dedicated Minister of Labour (Mr. MacEachen) is aware of the situation and that necessary changes will be made next winter. I can assure him that we will be on the look-out.

My constituents are proud and determined, Mr. Speaker, and who could blame them? That is why I wish to point out to the house that we are strongly against a cheap bargaining of government patronage all too often put into practice. We are not asking for more to get half our requests. As responsible citizens, conscious of the tremendous needs all across the country, we are asking only what we are entitled to, and our demands are legitimate and guaranteed, the same as anywhere else, by our initial investment through our normal contribution in the form of taxes.

[Text]

Montmagny-L'Islet is an important part of Quebec, and our great province is an integral part of Canada. Quebec has contributed much in the past to the development of this nation and will—I am really convinced of this fact—contribute very much more in the future, notwithstanding the occasional outbursts of extremist activities, which we are the first to condemn. In saying so, Mr. Speaker, I want