

*The Address—Mr. R. Gauthier*

stabilizing element from the material point of view as well as being the very cornerstone not only of the material prosperity of our great country but also of its moral health in the social field. It seems necessary that there be maintained for his benefit an agricultural support price policy for his main products, especially butter, cheese, pork, eggs and poultry. It would also be advisable that account be taken of the possibility of reducing the interest rates on those loans which farmers must obtain to improve their farms. The matter of setting up a central bureau for agricultural markets should also be considered. I therefore hope that the government will be as ready to adopt these measures as it was with regard to western wheat.

As mayor of the city of Chicoutimi, I feel it is necessary that the government consider the possibility of eliminating the 15 level crossings furrowing our city from west to east and constantly endangering highway traffic. There is all the more reason to do so when we consider that those crossings are situated at the bottom of hills. The implementation of the Fairweather plan would remedy this intolerable situation and I should be very glad to give the authorities the necessary information on that matter.

Even if the Minister of Transport did not mention the port of Chicoutimi in the house these last few days, I am sure he is aware that it is a link in the chain of national harbours and I invite him to Chicoutimi to see for himself the state of neglect of some areas of this port, with a view to authorizing the necessary improvements. I would also add that sounding of the bottom of the Saguenay river should be carried out for four miles below Chicoutimi. In this way the necessary straightening out of the channel could be carried out, as well as the dredging required to allow ships of all tonnage to reach Chicoutimi at all times. Serious consideration should also be given to the possibility of allowing the C.B.C. to set up a television station at Chicoutimi to be incorporated into the national system. There are channels available for that purpose and I think that there would be no objection to the government issuing the necessary licence.

Retaining walls should also be constructed, not only along the Saguenay at Chicoutimi and at Chicoutimi-Nord, but also at Port-Alfred, along Grande-Baie boulevard and, farther on, at Anse Saint-Jean and Petit-Saguenay, as well as at Valin and Saint-Fulgence. A viaduct has been a necessity at

[Mr. Gauthier (Chicoutimi).]

Port-Alfred for a long time. I urge that consideration be given to that matter as soon as possible.

As a former president of the union of the municipalities of the province of Quebec, may I bring up a matter which is of vital interest to our municipalities. Everybody knows that tight money and credit restrictions are currently the most agonizing issues for our municipalities. It is now difficult and costly to sell bonds, and in some cases impossible to find buyers, even if the projects to be financed are absolutely essential to the municipalities and even if all necessary guarantees are given; furthermore in cases where financing has been possible, the price of borrowed money has increased substantially.

To the higher cost of municipal loans must be added the increased costs of labour and materials.

The taxpayer's obligations are continually increasing, thus increasing in turn the cost of services; hence the need for municipalities to find new revenues in order to be able to meet the situation. Consequently, it would be in order perhaps to turn to our senior governments in order to obtain part of the taxes paid by the taxpayers. I presume it is with this idea in mind that the government has called a federal-provincial conference for the end of this month, but in my humble opinion, the municipalities should also have been invited, since they are also closely interested in this fiscal problem.

In any case, I hope this conference will bring the municipalities an adequate solution to their fiscal problems.

Mr. Speaker, does everything I just said—and I do not want to blame anybody in particular—not stress the fact that the district of Saguenay-Lake St. John has been somewhat ignored, and that Canada has therefore not had all the benefit from its especially desirable position as a means of penetrating the very economic heart of the continental spread of Quebec, whose mineral wealth has at least been known for more than half a century.

The reason for this fact is probably easy to understand. After confederation, the wish to achieve a great Canada took priority over the care of building up the country more rationally perhaps, more economically, but in a way that would not be in keeping with the great political aim that had been set up. Disregarding the hinterland and supposing that another nation, different from eastern Canada, would have been established in western Canada, it would seem obvious that