

Indian people control over the matters that affect their day to day lives there is no restriction of any kind to access to the greater society, be it the vote, be it running for public office or any sort of restriction of even the most minute form. To draw a spurious relationship is quite unworthy of the Hon. Member. I know that he knows much better and is just trying to bait me a little bit. I do not mind that at all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Montmorency—Orléans (Mrs. Blouin).

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne Blouin (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to congratulate our new Speaker on being elected to the Chair of this House, and also the Deputy Speaker and Acting Speakers, and assure them of my cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to rise in the House today in response to the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the entire population of the riding of Montmorency—Orléans takes pride in the opportunity I am given today.

Mr. Speaker, I shall, if I may, start my speech with a brief description of my riding and an outline of its history. Subsequently, I intend to comment on the themes of social justice contained in the Speech from the Throne. Northeast of Quebec City, Montmorency—Orléans covers an area of nearly 2,969 square kilometers. Its south side borders on the St. Lawrence River, while its northern limits go as far as the Parc des Laurentides. To the east, it has always entertained harmonious relations with its neighbour, the riding of Charlevoix.

Seventy per cent of the riding's 90,000 people live in the urban area of Beauport. As the economic focus of the riding, Beauport has many small- and medium-sized businesses, mainly in the services sector.

Agriculture is an integral part of life in this riding. Most arable land is found on the Île d'Orléans and along the Beauport shore. The farmers in Montmorency—Orléans are knowledgeable and skilled, proud of their often ancestral properties, while they have no hesitation in using the latest technology to upgrade their production capacity in various agricultural sectors.

Mr. Speaker, Montmorency—Orléans is also a part of our history. With Quebec City, this region can claim to have been the womb of French culture in North America. More recently, the town of Sainte-Anne-de-Beauport became a famous stop on Pope Jean Paul II's historic pilgrimage on Canadian soil.

Already famous for its pilgrimages, the region also has a wild life reserve, a genuine sanctuary for white geese, whose fame has reached beyond our borders.

As an area that attracts tourism, the riding includes among its many attractions Montmorency Falls, the highest falls in

Quebec, and Mont Sainte-Anne, a ski resort of international calibre.

Mr. Speaker, I could not describe this region without evoking the rural charms of the Île d'Orléans. It has been described by poet Félix Leclerc as 40 miles of tranquility, and for farmers of the Côte de Beauport, its reflection in the St. Lawrence still remains the best of barometers.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of my constituency are warm people, full of originality and aware of the historic and cultural significance of their region.

In the Throne Speech, the Government squarely states its will to improve the quality of life for all Canadians. This Government confirmed its determination to achieve this social objective by stating its desire to make of this country, and I quote: . . . a modern, tolerant and caring nation in which its citizens are secure and prosperous.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are not immune to the upheavals and reassessments which typify this period in history. Family members are facing new commitments and, in many cases, a new sharing of parental responsibilities.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative to take concrete action to promote the development of the family unit. As far as the family is concerned, the Government must also become the catalyst for a change in attitudes. In family-related matters, the Government recognizes the obvious expertise of the various groups interested in these issues and listens carefully to all their suggestions. Our Government is responsive to the needs of the Canadian family and will continue to work for its development.

At a time when some people are vainly attempting to discredit our efforts and question our will to honour our commitments, it is my conviction, Mr. Speaker, that we are on the right track.

The Government, in its efforts to maintain the quality of life for our senior citizens, has announced that low-income widows and widowers aged 60 to 64 will now receive a larger part of the spouse allowance, at whatever age their spouse may have deceased. It is important to note here that mostly women will benefit from this.

It is along those lines, with that sense of social responsibility that the Government intends to maintain its support to senior citizens. In that respect, let me recall the changes proposed to the Canada Pension Plan, a package of various improvements including benefit eligibility at 60, higher disability benefits, the extension of the survivor's pension in case of remarriage, and new rules for sharing credits and pensions between spouses.

Who among senior citizens does not benefit from the New Horizons Program? This is a program that enables them to carry on community-oriented projects which they have themselves designed and managed. This Government has not forgotten that those people are the very foundation of our society.