

*The Address**[Translation]*

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane):** Madam Speaker, since this will be my maiden speech in the House, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all members on their election. It would have been nice to see more members opposite, because it may be the only time I have cause to congratulate them. The Bible says that on the seventh day, God rested, but I see my colleagues opposite start resting on the fifth.

If all members of this Parliament are imbued, as I am, with a desire to serve our constituents, during this session we should be able to put in place all that is necessary for genuine economic recovery. Economic recovery is essential for this country and even more so for my riding.

Voters in the riding of Matapédia—Matane expect a lot from their federal member. At the beginning of this mandate, my constituents are delighted they finally have a member who will be able to speak his mind, and speak it more often, in this House and in the riding.

I also want to take this opportunity to offer my constituents my full co-operation and thank them for their support. I will do everything in my power to give them what they are entitled to expect of a federal member, especially a sovereigntist member in Ottawa.

In fact, voters in Matapédia—Matane made a very clear choice on October 25. My opponent, whose party is on the government side today, received the full support of the party machine, but voters made a clear decision. Once again, I want to take this opportunity to thank them.

For me, to participate actively in politics is part and parcel of my longstanding commitment to my community. I believe in this wonderful region, in the energy and determination of the people who live there, and that is the main reason for my commitment.

My presence in the House today as a member of the Bloc Québécois also arises from an act of faith in the sovereignty of Quebec. To be sovereign means to be free to do things one's own way and it also means to be in charge of one's own economic and social development.

People in the riding of Matapédia—Matane have the energy and determination to take charge of their own lives. People consult each other and share the tools they need to develop the impressive potential of their region, whether we are talking about forestry, tourism, mining or other sectors of the economy. The men and women of this riding have set up consultation tables where they share their experience.

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In my riding, we have industry and business people who believe in that region and who do their share for the develop-

ment of that new social contract. It is with those people that I want to work. It is for those men and women that I came to this House.

So, my goal is twofold: the development of my riding and the sovereignty of Quebec.

Let me introduce you in a few words to the riding of Matapédia—Matane. I live in a community of about 5 000 people that have provided the Church with three bishops who are still alive.

They are His Grace the Archbishop Louis Lévesque, who was born in Amqui, His Lordship Belzile, who is now in Africa, and His Lordship Dumais, who has just been appointed to the Gaspé diocese. He is a friend and I am very proud of that. Perhaps a new Guinness record has just been established in my riding.

The main resource in my riding is forestry and, because people believed in them, we managed to keep several villages from closing in the early 1970s. Forest business owners got together to establish a management company and used known forestry methods to develop their forests. They were so successful that twenty years later, in 1993, the Canadian Forestry Association bestowed upon the 17 MRC municipalities of the Matapédia Valley the title of forest capital of Canada. I take this opportunity to congratulate its president, Mr. Daniel Lamarre, and all his team.

The commitment towards forest management as an economic development tool for ensuring the survival of the small communities of my riding is well underway. We owe it to those workers and owners who once believed that it was possible for them to continue living in their communities.

On the north shore of the Gaspé Peninsula, there is also a fishery industry. It is going through an unprecedented crisis, and it needs help. Everyone here has heard about the delicious Matane shrimp and has feasted on them.

In that part of the riding there is also aquaculture, a fast-growing industry which shows considerable promise, because of the constant crises in the fisheries.

There is also the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, in Sainte-Flavie, where they carry out interesting and much needed research on sea products. By the way, the institute is still waiting for funds to finish the breakwater in order to dock its research boat. Unfortunately, funds for this project were reallocated by the former government. It is costing the institute extra money each year to dock the boat elsewhere.

In Mont-Joli, the regional airport has been waiting almost ten years for millions of dollars. Let me say that I will keep asking for those funds.

In my riding there is a shipyard managed by a very dynamic team of women employing a highly skilled labour force. That industry is also going through a crisis. It too needs help.