

The Address—Mr. Girard

Conservative Government has been able to restore an atmosphere of cordiality and co-operation to the relations between the provinces and Ottawa.

Petty quarrels have given way to serious attempts at co-operation between the two most important levels of government, and as a result, a host of agreements will be signed.

Mr. Speaker, the present Government wishes to continue its efforts to stimulate economic recovery. In Canada, the bank rate is the lowest it has been since 1978.

Since we were elected, we have created over 600,000 jobs in Canada. The federal deficit was down for the first time in six years, and in 1985-86, the Government will have spent about \$1.5 billion less than was forecast.

In Quebec as in the rest of Canada, the general economic situation has improved. A comprehensive agreement has been signed as well as a large number of subsidiary agreements which are expected to have a positive impact on mining, forestry and tourism.

My colleagues from *La Belle Province* appreciate this Government's efforts to help their economy recover from a difficult recessionary period. Various economic sectors in Quebec have benefitted from this Government's initiatives. After waiting several years, dairy producers have finally obtained a guarantee of long-term production. Major agreements have been signed with Quebec to develop francophone television.

In addition, the Canadian Government has signed an \$89 million agreement with the SPAR Aerospace company.

The 9 per cent federal sales tax on fuel used by fishermen has been abolished. The previous Government had rejected the claims of expropriated land-owners in Mirabel, but our government has tried to negotiate and has now signed an agreement favourable to these people. This is another telling example of the commitment of our Government to give Quebec and French-Canadians a meaningful place in our Canadian federal system.

Mr. Speaker, as announced in the Speech from the Throne, our Government intends to further our economic renewal by continuing to restore fiscal health to Canada, by taking new trade initiatives and by going forward with the long awaited tax reform.

As far as social justice is concerned, the Government will pursue its objectives of attempting to meet the changing needs of Canadian families, improving the status of women, conserving our natural environment and promoting the full and active participation of all citizens. Because of its history, geography and growing interest in all matters related to international affairs, Canada has a unique opportunity to play a major role in world affairs. The Government is therefore committed to the pursuit of its efforts to advance human rights, preserve world peace while asserting our national sovereignty, and promote a stable and growing world economy.

[English]

The Throne Speech reiterates our Government's sincere commitment to economic renewal, social justice and national reconciliation. The best evidence of these three goals is embodied in the steps we have taken to treat the problems of regional disparity that exist in this country. For example, we in Atlantic Canada, particularly in Newfoundland, Cape Breton and northern New Brunswick, have not shared in the recovery that other parts of this great nation have experienced.

Recognizing this problem, special programs have been designed to bring these economically deprived areas back into the mainstream of a prosperous Canada. The Atlantic Enterprise Program guarantees up to a billion dollars in loans to the private sector in the Atlantic region. The Atlantic Enterprise Program will provide Atlantic Canada with a greater share of federal government purchases. This program will increase the level of government purchases in Atlantic Canada by 40 per cent over the next four years. It will certainly generate new investment and job opportunities for Maritimers and Newfoundlanders alike.

Our Government has taken on the responsibility of ensuring equitable regional distribution of national prosperity.

Enterprise Cape Breton is another fine example of the profound care this Government has for those areas where low growth and high unemployment have now been the norm for so long. Since these incentives were put into motion, more than \$173 million has gone to support private companies that have invested in Cape Breton and full-time employment opportunities have been created for some 770 people.

The Northern Benefits Program is working to lessen the apparent disparities which exist for those who live in the North and isolated posts.

Another program that will have beneficial effects on those areas of Canada that face mass lay-offs, plant closures or chronic unemployment is the Community Futures Program, which is part of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. So far, 22 locations have been selected to participate in this \$125 million program. This is a completely new approach and will ultimately result in the decision-making process being carried out at the local level where it counts the most. I am pleased to note that Restigouche has been selected for assistance under Community Futures.

These programs are but a few of the many which indicate that the Government is keenly aware of regional disparities. The Atlantic Accord recognized Newfoundland as a full and equal partner in the management of offshore oil resources. An energy accord was also signed with Nova Scotia. The Fisheries Improvement Loans Act has been extended to aid small independent fishermen, and an Atlantic regional council of representatives from various fishery organizations has been formed to advise the Minister on Atlantic fishery management policy. Federal-provincial agreements have been signed in such areas as aquaculture, fisheries research and co-operative