

The Address—Mr. F. Côté

May I be allowed first, in the name of the people of the constituency of Nicolet-Yamaska and in my own, to express our deepest sympathy to the family of His Excellency General Vanier and to wish them the necessary strength to overcome that most severe test. I should also like to pay our highest respects to the man who has accepted the heavy responsibilities of governor general of Canada.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my warmest congratulations for the impartial and intelligent way in which you chair the debates in this house.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate those who have accepted such high posts as those of Minister of Justice, of Solicitor General, of President of the Privy Council and Member of the Administration, as well as the two new parliamentary secretaries.

I am quite sure I am expressing the feelings of all the liberal members from Quebec in congratulating most warmly the hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration) our new leader. His appointment pleases the whole population.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Côté (Nicolet-Yamaska): My congratulations to the member for Burin-Burgeo (Mr. Jamieson) for the great ease and easy command with which he proposed the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I wish I had his ease, his fluency, in order to express myself as eloquently as he did. But let us say that Providence did not mete out its blessings equally and that I accept what little talent it has given me. The fact that I have been asked to second the motion for the address in reply to the speech from the throne, in a different language, is evidence that here in Canada, no matter what language we may speak, we can unite our forces to build a greater Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Côté (Nicolet-Yamaska): The interest taken by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) is not limited to asking me to second the motion for the address in reply to the speech from the throne. In fact, since the coming into office of the Liberal party, all my constituents, mainly those in the rural areas, have been pleased with the numerous advantages they have had, as they were perhaps the group most forsaken in the past.

[Mr. Côté (Nicolet-Yamaska).]

Since my election I have not taken part in the debates very often, and the same is true of the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo. Perhaps I understood the statement of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), and I did not speak often, although I could have done so on many occasions, in view of what I know about farming. I do not wish to offend anyone but I will try to dot my i's and set the record straight about various things I did not find quite normal in some speeches made in this house. However, when some hon. members in great flights of oratory criticized the farm policy of the present government, I could have taken the floor quite often on some particular points and proved to those speakers that they did not know anything about rural life in eastern Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Côté (Nicolet-Yamaska): Instead, I tried to understand them, but I realized that what possibly mattered was simply to filibuster. Yet, when they had the opportunity during six years they were in power, from 1957 to 1963, to implement the great appreciation they had for agriculture, particularly for eastern Canada, they did not act. So, to me who sat and listened, it was difficult to take these statements seriously because, after all, for us who live in eastern Canada, perhaps in a rural environment, we have built much and brought forward claims which were not considered at the time by those who now create this opposition.

Listening to the speech from the throne, I noted that many beneficial measures are provided for, particularly as far as the rural people are concerned, the people whom I represent being from Nicolet-Yamaska.

Nicolet-Yamaska is a constituency bordered by the St. Lawrence river to the north, to the east by the constituency of Lotbinière, so well represented by the present member (Mr. Choquette), and to the south by the constituency of Drummond-Arthabaska, represented by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Pepin), who so ably supports the efforts of our leader here in the Canadian parliament, and by the constituency of Richelieu-Verchères to the west.

• (4:00 p.m.)

The people of Nicolet-Yamaska, a riding which is agricultural to the extent of 80 per cent, are deeply attached to the finest French-Canadian traditions. Their generosity prompts them to share in every joy as well as in the greatest hardships. We take pride in many institutions, such as the two seminaries