

The Address—Mr. Gourd

tions of all regions of our country. But if we reflect on the matter, has this not been the case throughout our history? Through free and honest discussions and by taking into account the context in which we were living, have we not improved, amended and even eliminated certain outmoded structures which no longer coincided with the new realities? From what some people say, we might think that Canada has not evolved since the beginnings of confederation in 1867 and, in fact, that we have regressed into pre-history.

Has the separatist government of Mr. Lévesque said that in 1977-78 the federal government transferred \$4.4 billion to Quebec? Has it said that \$1.3 billion were paid out for equalization purposes? Has it told the citizens of my constituency of Argenteuil about the massive federal investments for the construction of the Mirabel airport which will soon become the major entry port to North America? Has it told them about the economic advantages this represents for my area? Has the present separatist government in Quebec told my fellow citizens that the purchase of the F-18 will bring about economic fallout of \$100 million in the Saint-André sector in Lachute? And finally, Mr. Speaker, did Mr. Lévesque and his team tell Quebecers that English Canadians of all provinces recognize Francophones? That they accept Quebecers as Canadians on an equal basis? Unfortunately, the answer is no. It is therefore up to us, the members of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties in the federal Parliament, to do so, and as the member for Argenteuil, I shall undertake to do so in my constituency, in Quebec and throughout Canada.

● (1530)

[English]

To this effect, I am happy to see that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) has understood the necessity to fight separatism, that he has realized that this ideal is inapplicable and dangerous, not only for English Canada but also for Quebec. Furthermore, when I mentioned a while back that the English Canadian felt strongly for the French Canadian, and even though I as a Liberal do not share the political beliefs of the Leader of the Opposition, I had him in mind because he is the perfect image of an English Canadian from the west who has felt the necessity for and taken the time to learn the language spoken by six million Canadians. If I may add, he has succeeded extremely well.

[Translation]

Some may wonder, Mr. Speaker, why I place so much emphasis on this question and why, in fact, my entire speech is devoted to it. Indeed, many people have told me and told others that our economic problems are more urgent than the issue of separation. I respect this opinion, Mr. Speaker, but I would add that there could be no healthy economic life in an unstable and uncertain political climate.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I say this: If we Canadians of any region want to learn an important lesson from all this

crisis which we face now, then we should remember that Canada, its structures, its history and its future should never again be taken for granted.

[English]

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I should first of all like to add my voice to those who have extended their congratulations and their best wishes to Madam Speaker on her historic appointment and also to you, sir, for your appointment. I would also like to extend my regards and my congratulations to both the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply and, further, to newly elected members who, like myself, have made or will be making their initial address in this House.

My own involvement over some 25 years, starting in my mid-teens, in the political process has led me to believe and often say to my constituents and many others that those who are deeply involved in this business that is called politics, whether in an elective sense, in an organizational sense or in other ways, often tend to have much more in common with each other than they even have from time to time with those who share their allegiances but who are not as active as participants in this sphere.

As this is my maiden speech, I would also like to take an opportunity to say a few words about the nature and history of my riding, a constituency with rather a unique tradition, a constituency—I suppose others would say it—"not quite like the others" and which I am proud and honoured to represent. As the new member for Kootenay West, I must also say that I feel a rather significant degree of humility, having in mind the predecessors who have represented my party and others over the past many years.

For some 30 of the past 35 years, since the late Herbert W. Herridge, "the Squire of Kootenay West" as he was to become known to the nation in his later years, was first elected as the "people's CCF" candidate in the general election of 1945, which is an incident that is rather unique in the political process, Kootenay West has been ably represented by members who have been elected under the banner of both the CCF and the NDP.

Mr. Herridge's combination of dedication to his constituents, his gentlemanly manner, his good humour and sometimes his mischievous charm captivated members on all sides of this House and, indeed, across the land. Upon his retirement in 1968, he was succeeded by Randolph Harding, a 23-year veteran of the B.C. legislature who was known, at least throughout British Columbia, as the "Ombudsman of the Kootenays" and who during his six years in this House was accorded recognition by ministers and members on the other side of this chamber and many others as well as "the most dedicated and most knowledgeable member of this House on matters respecting the environment". The person who said that was the minister responsible for the environment during that time.

Mr. Harding, I would like to say, because I worked with him very closely over a period of time, was also one of the most