

The Address

enough money made available so that development at the local level can take place under them.

We see CIDA as an agency with expenditures that can make a very important contribution to economic development in our region. Unfortunately, CIDA does not seem to have discovered the marvellous food value of fish.

For some time I have been amazed that with the food aid programs around the world we have not taken advantage of the various kinds of dry products which could be used that are wholesome, nutritious and, indeed, would support the Atlantic Canada fishing industry at a time when it is in difficulty.

The last point I wish to make on this has to do with base closures. We found out two years ago the devastating socio-economic impact that could be the fall-out of base closures. I recognize that it is difficult. The Department of National Defence is not a social agency. It has responsibility and it has to use its budget as best it can to achieve the goals it has established. However, there is no good time for a base closure if it is your community that is impacted.

I know. I lived through the base closure at Barrington as a result of the 1989 budget. It did not get the publicity that Summerside did, because of course it was not a closure of the same magnitude. However we are hearing stories now that the government is looking at further base closures.

We in Nova Scotia are hearing stories that Cornwallis may be one of the bases targeted. I want to say here and now that the closure of base Cornwallis would have a devastating economic impact on Nova Scotia at a time when we simply cannot afford it.

As a member of Parliament it is my right to be heard in this place. I believe as a member of Parliament that it is my responsibility to be heard in this place but, I believe equally so, it is the responsibility of the government to hear and to listen to what is said in this place.

I want to say here and now as one member from Nova Scotia—and I am sure I will be joined by every other member from Nova Scotia—to the government: “If you want to think about base closures, forget it for now and forget it for Nova Scotia, because we simply cannot handle that right now and we are not prepared to do so”.

I know my time is running down. The key to unity is economic prosperity. When I go home people do not talk to me about unity issues. They talk to me about the basic economic issues: jobs, survival in tough times. That has to be the focus.

I commend the government for putting emphasis on linking economic prosperity and unity because they are one and the same. My closing words have to be as my opening, that as we look at the renewal of Canada, we think about Quebec and we think about Alberta but we think also of the maritimes and of Atlantic Canada. I urge the government as it makes its plans, and I urge all members of this House to bear in mind that we are all Canadians and we must all be in if we are going to have the kind of unified strength that I know we all wish for.

• (1530)

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few points and raise a few questions of my colleague.

I quite agree with him when he says when we think about the renewal of Canada we have to think of every single region. We have to think of Quebec, Ontario, the Atlantic provinces, the west, and the great north.

I would, in fact, be prepared to support his plea that no bases be closed particularly if he were able to persuade his government to go back to P.E.I. and see if it could undo the harm that it has done; go back to Manitoba, to Portage la Prairie to see what it might be able to do as a result of the devastation it has wreaked upon my own province of Manitoba.

When he began his remarks he referred to a visionary Speech from the Throne. I think that is a bit of an exaggeration and I will make a few comments and perhaps have him reconsider what he said.

With respect to national unity, I wonder if he would agree with me that we are in fact wasting time. We have a constitutional crisis. I cannot understand why with any kind of crisis one is putting off action. In the Speech from the Throne there is vague reference to a possible referendum or constituent assembly. There is, and I commend the government for that, some hope for aboriginal peoples, although the extent of what will happen is certainly not clear. I would have liked some assurance that language minorities would be protected. I