

Retirement of Opposition Leader

express gratitude to the Prime Minister for his good wishes. However, I wish to bring to the attention of the house that our new leader is in the gallery now, watching with a great deal of interest the proceedings in this chamber.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: He is a man of integrity, thoughtfulness and reason, one who has projected his image in a most acceptable way in Canada, and the members of this party in this chamber as well as throughout Canada are looking forward to his entry into the House of Commons as soon as possible. I must say emphatically that we are all united behind him to form an effective and forceful opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister has commented on changes of personnel in the government and House of Commons which will undoubtedly have far reaching repercussions on the political life of this country.

I am sure all of us are pleased at the honour which has been given to hon. Mr. Pickersgill in his appointment as chairman of the Canadian Transportation Commission. I think it was Senator Chubby Power who said that a member of parliament could only get out of politics in one of two ways, either by dying or by being defeated, and the first was so final and the second so humiliating. However, Mr. Pickersgill has managed to find a third way. It is not every member who can write his own ticket or draft the bill for his own final haven of rest.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Douglas: I only hope that not too many other ministers will try to emulate him in that regard, but we wish him well in the high post to which he has been appointed.

We also wish the other new ministers, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux), well in the responsibilities which they are now assuming. The appointment of Mr. Granger as Minister without Portfolio will cause some disappointment to those from the province of Newfoundland who had hoped one of the present members of the house would be selected for that post, but I have no doubt the Prime Minister has very sound reasons for the decision he has taken.

[Mr. Starr.]

It would not be appropriate at this time to make any comment about the former leader of the opposition because, like the Prime Minister, I do not want anything I say to sound like a valedictory. We are all hoping he will continue in the house. I think we will all agree that the fact he is no longer leader of the opposition will make this a much less interesting and colourful place, but we do hope he will continue to occupy his seat and give the house the benefit of his long experience.

I would like to congratulate the Acting Leader of the Opposition and to say how pleased we are that this honour has been conferred upon him by his party. From experience we know he will discharge his responsibilities with great ability and with conscientiousness. Of course I would remind him of the old slogan "Big Brother is watching you."

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Douglas: He will, of course, be expected to conduct himself according to the party's strategy.

With reference to the new leader of the Conservative party, may I say I hope we will have the opportunity of welcoming him into the house before too long, and at that time we will be able to express our appreciation of the work he has done and to extend our congratulations on the honour which has been conferred upon him by the Conservative party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

● (3:00 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, we wish sincerely to congratulate the new appointees to the federal departments made public over the week-end. As the right hon. Prime Minister, we regret the departure of the former leader of the opposition, the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. John Diefenbaker) whom we have all learned to know in various ways in this chamber.

In fact, the hon. member for Prince Albert has been in this house for many years. Personally, I came to know him when I was a very young member, in 1947, that is, 20 years ago. At the time, the former leader of the opposition was only 52. He was then already a determined fighter, a hard worker as he has shown himself to be throughout his political life.

Everyone agrees that he brought colour to parliament and he was a true leader. He had