

He rose from inconspicuous beginnings through the Soviet bureaucracy to the supreme position in the Soviet Government. While his style did not mark a departure from that of previous Soviet leaders, men and women of good will around the world will be hoping that the appointment of a successor from the new generation may mark a new approach to the contentious issues dividing East and West.

The hopes of the world for an easing of tensions and a step forward toward lasting peace are pinned on the arms talks now going on at Geneva. It can be regarded as a sign of hope that those in charge of the direction of the Soviet Union have seen fit to authorize the peace talks to continue. It may be that the world is on the threshold of its greatest opportunity for new approaches to the issues that have divided us since the end of World War II. I am sure that Members in this House, and Canadians everywhere, will share the conviction that the time is now for a concerted world effort to banish forever the dreadful threat of nuclear holocaust hanging over the world.

While it is unrealistic to expect a radical change in Soviet objectives as a result of a change in leadership, a new leader may bring about a change in style, and a more open approach which in itself would result in an easing of tensions. Many of us had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gorbachev when he visited Ottawa, and were impressed with his readiness to discuss issues bluntly and openly. In his recent visit to England he created a favourable impression on the British public.

Regardless of who the new leader is, men and women throughout the world will look forward with hope to positive steps by the superpowers to back away from the abyss of nuclear confrontation. The arms control talks and the appointment of a new Soviet leader present an opportunity that should not be missed. It is an opportunity for positive steps at the world level to inject a new style in relations between East and West, and to place the future of the human family above sectarian interests.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that the Official Opposition has learned today of the death of President Konstantin Chernenko.

Mr. Chernenko had devoted his life to the service of his country, and in the brief period that he was President of the Soviet Union he worked to improve the prospect for peace in the world by resuming peace talks with the United States of America, in Geneva.

The Official Opposition extends its sincere condolences to the Government and people of the Soviet Union and to the family of the late President. We wish to take this opportunity to ensure that the Government reaffirms our strong desire to work in co-operation and friendship with the Soviet Union to further the search for a true and lasting order of world peace and security.

The Soviet Union stands at an important threshold. A new generation of leaders will decide the future destiny of not only the Soviet Union but also possibly of mankind. It is our sincere hope that President Chernenko's reported successor, Mikhail Gorbachev, will continue the late President's efforts along the

elusive path of peace. Mr. Gorbachev's visit to Canada and to other western nations will hopefully have given him a personal insight into our great desire for peace and co-operation with the Soviet Union.

I can assure the Canadian people that this Party will continue to urge the Government, no matter what the difficulties, to work with the Soviet Union to rid the world of the scourge of war.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we were very sorry to hear the news of President Chernenko's death, and we wish to offer the people and the Government of that great country our sincere sympathy.

We were pleased to hear that Mr. Gorbachev has been appointed the new leader of the Soviet Union. We had the opportunity to meet him in Canada when he met with Members of Parliament. He appeared to have the makings of a modern leader with an open mind, and we hope that remembering the friendship he showed our country when he was in Canada, he will try to get to know us and understand us better. In fact, this may be an opportunity for the Government of Canada to show that we are an independent country, and that we may have a role to play between the two superpowers, so that a durable and lasting peace may be achieved in this very troubled world.

[*English*]

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Mr. Chernenko. I would also like to extend our deepest sympathy to the people of the Soviet Union who have now lost their third leader in three years. This is a cause for great sadness for any society.

We welcome the choice of Mr. Gorbachev to succeed Mr. Chernenko. He is a man of relative youth and vigour in terms of international leadership, as was displayed very forcefully to those of us who had the opportunity of meeting him when he was in Canada. Although here in his capacity of Minister of Agriculture, he did show a very deep understanding and concern about arms control matters. Those of us who had the opportunity to question him in committee found that he was relatively open to ideas emanating from a variety of nations, including Canada, on arms control and disarmament matters.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chernenko was not in office a sufficiently long enough time for us to be able to discern the degree to which he, too, would have pursued arms control and disarmament matters, nor the degree to which he would have pursued a greater opening up of Soviet society.

Mr. Gorbachev and those around him—and I hope one of these days we will see that number include a prominent woman—do, it seems to me, have a concern about Soviet society itself and the possible opening up of that society, particularly in the human rights field. So, while joining with the Soviet people in their grief at the death of their leader, we welcome an opportunity, and hope and trust that the Govern-