

The Address—Mr. Pearson

in predictable fashion. I feel a sense of relief, however, because his speech was less predictable in one sense. He was not quite as hard on the government and the leader of the government today as he has been on other occasions. Perhaps he is saving that.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is the centennial spirit.

Mr. Pearson: I should like to reciprocate that centennial spirit by taking out of my remarks anything that might indicate a reflection on the wisdom, energy, devotion, determination and all the other good qualities which the right hon. gentleman possesses. At the end of his very interesting statement, he said that he was not going to move on this occasion an omnibus amendment. I must say that at first glance this one seems to be rather omnibus, although it does concentrate on the calling of a constitutional conference to revise and rewrite our constitution. I shall have something to say about this later.

At one point in his remarks he stated that this country was never so divided as it is now. I do not agree with that. However, I do agree with what he said later and which I hope represents his more considered opinion. He said that there is in the country now a spirit of unity and willingness to co-operate of which we all, as Canadians, can be proud.

In his introduction to his remarks the right hon. gentleman presented his own version of Canadian history. He was very eloquent indeed, and with what he told us I have no quarrel except perhaps to point out that when he charges us on this side, as he so often does, with trying to put into effect in this country a two-nation policy in the political sense, and when he quotes Sir John A. Macdonald to underline the enormity of that kind of policy he should remember, and I am sure he does remember, that it was Sir John A. Macdonald who said once of French speaking Canadians, "Treat them as a nation and they will act as a free people generally do."

The right hon. gentleman complained, and I certainly do not quarrel with this, about the length of the speech from the throne and the inadequacy of the material in the speech having regard to its length. It was a long speech, Mr. Speaker, though I seem to remember when I was in opposition standing behind the bar in the Senate chamber for more than 41 minutes on more than one occasion. I promise to do my best next January, February or March to keep it down to about 25 minutes,

[Mr. Pearson.]

and I am sure the Governor General will co-operate with me in that regard.

Having mentioned the length of the speech, however, the right hon. gentleman quarreled about the fact we had not included in it a great many things which he mentioned and which, if we had included them in the speech, would have extended it another 40 or 45 minutes. It is quite true that no speech from the throne, however long it may be, can encompass all the legislative plans of a government over a period of what is now normally about 12 months. I will try to mention some of the things in detail that were not included in the speech from the throne but with which I hope this parliament will be able to deal in our centennial year.

The right hon. gentleman referred to us as a "look-into-it" government. When we are faced with problems we look into them by setting up commissions of inquiry. This is quite true. My own experience has taught me that it is quite wise to look into things before you act. But having complained about this weakness, as he termed it, on our part, he proceeded to recommend two further inquiries, both of which might be quite useful but which would require in one case setting up a royal commission and in the other a parliamentary committee into education.

● (4:40 p.m.)

I wish to make another promise to my right hon. friend which arises out of the statement he made in Winnipeg when he intimated that as a crafty, cunning politician—those were not his words but that is what he meant—

Mr. Diefenbaker: No.

Mr. Pearson: —and I know that he meant these words in a kindly way—

Mr. Diefenbaker: I had not that in mind.

Mr. Pearson: I never had it in mind either. But the hon. gentleman, speaking as a politician, said that I might well take advantage of any disunity and division in the Conservative party and call a quick election in centennial year. I wish to assure him and the house that I have no such intention.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Of course the Prime Minister said the same thing in 1965.

Mr. Pearson: If there is an election this year it will be only because of defeat in the house on a motion of non-confidence. My