

*The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker*

that enthusiasm and that idealism which new members bring to the thinking and the general conduct of this chamber. I welcome too the new ministers of the crown and also those who have fringe benefits in the position of parliamentary secretaries. To each and every one of them I extend my congratulations. I have been somewhat surprised, however, by some of the recent events that brought about seniority within the government of Canada. All of us who have known the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) for so long hoped he would have been in a position second only to the Prime Minister. As I suggested the other day, possibly in the light of retrospect of recent events, if he had only followed the course taken by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chevrier) in leaving his province of Ontario and departing for Quebec, his seniority might thereby have been assured in a manner which would have been appreciated by hon. members of this house. The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) shakes his head. I have here, but I am not going to waste them on him, some of the clippings in this connection in which reference was made along the line I have just mentioned.

To the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) I extend congratulations—I have already done so—on his achievement of this high office. At the same time I extend to him warmest felicitations on the honour that has come to him in becoming a member of Her Majesty's privy council, one of the greatest honours that can come to anyone within the commonwealth.

I hope this parliament will be an effective one. I hope no action will be taken by any member to degrade in any way this institution. I can assure the government that there will be no repetition of those things that took place last December, when from one end of Canada to the other there was condemnation against the opposition of that day for their attitude and action in refusing to allow the prime minister of Canada to speak in this chamber. The attitude of this party will be to do everything it can to make strong and effective its contribution to the bettering of the welfare of our country.

There are great problems to be faced. We shall criticize in a spirit of constructive fairness. Whatever practical knowledge and experience we have will be made available so that we may do our part to contribute to the economic and social welfare and prosperity of Canada. I do not intend to be very critical. I am not going to relive the days of the election or the events of last year, excepting in so far as those things will have to be referred to as a basis for argument. I do say this, though, that as a result of the election—

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while, naturally, it did not turn out as we had hoped—the Conservative party has a stronger opposition today than at any time in all its history since 1867, with the one exception of 1925. I say, sir, with the utmost sincerity, that I believe, in the light of subsequent events, the policies that were advanced will be vindicated in the thinking of the Canadian parliament.

I am glad there is going to be some action taken in regard to making parliament more effective. I think we will have to give consideration to the shortening of the period between the date the writs are issued and the holding of the election. I think now, having regard to the events that have taken place, the technological and transportation advances, we might even consider shortening the period to five or six weeks. That could be done, provided a permanent voters list is set up.

I think, too, we should give consideration to restricting the amount of expenditure that can be made by any candidate in an election campaign, for otherwise potentially good members are denied membership because of lack of financial assistance. I believe that expenditures will have to be limited if democracy is to be preserved within our country. I betray no secret when I say that the tremendous amounts available to the Liberal party in the recent election leads one to ask whence came those contributions. Wherever they came from, I want to emphasize once more the need of action being taken to prevent the ever mounting increase in the costs that are incident to elections.

Having made those few general remarks, I come now to the 60 days of decision. That is a most interesting expression, borrowed from President Kennedy, with the deletion of 40 days. President Kennedy thought it would take 100 days. The Liberal party decided on 60 so that they would not, according to those in the press gallery who know, be charged with political plagiarism. Sir, I too, read a book the other day about 60 days, 60 days of disaster in 1914, when a great tragedy followed from false optimism.

Today we live in this period; we are still in the 60 days, although the government is starting to recede from that. They do not like an attitude on the part of anyone of directing the attention of the people to the particular inning we are in. There have been some errors and few hits in the past 30 days. But we are in the beginning of the golden age of miracles, these 60 days, with generalities made brilliant by propaganda stardust, by splashes in the press and public relations gimmicks. It has been