

I understand, when running for the office of mayor of Prince Albert. He was first elected in 1940 in the old constituency of Lake Centre. Just to add a personal note, Mr. Speaker, in the election of 1949 he ran in that seat defeating my uncle, Donald Arthur MacRae. My uncle's wife, Marguerite MacRae, was a cousin to my father, and it was that family which sponsored us to come to Canada. Arthur MacRae ran third for the Liberals and Mr. Diefenbaker won the election.

Of course I am sure all Members of this House know that in 1957 he formed the first Conservative Government in 22 years, and then in 1958 led the Conservative Party to a resounding and historic victory.

• (1740)

John Diefenbaker was a prairie populist. Someone even called him a prairie radical. He experienced the depressions and hardships that the prairie people experienced during the Great Depression. He was a great advocate for the little people, the common people. He saw how the vested interests of the country, particularly those on Bay Street, robbed the farmers and workers of their property and dignity. He was a great champion of those ordinary people. He had a deep sense of dignity and human justice and freedom. As such, we see the types of legislation that the Diefenbaker Government introduced. The Charter of Rights and some of the best social legislation in the country came from the Diefenbaker Government.

The Province of Saskatchewan has honoured John Diefenbaker in a variety of ways. The original sod homestead was moved and is now situated on the legislative grounds in Regina. There is a bust of the Hon. John George Diefenbaker in the rotunda of the legislative building. This was done by Saskatchewan NDP and Liberal Governments because we consider John Diefenbaker to be one of our own.

I think it would be fitting to have a statue of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker on the Parliament Hill grounds. I concur with the former speaker from the Liberal Party that we should also have statues of the other Prime Ministers, particularly that of Mike Pearson because he also made a tremendous contribution to Canada. I think a statue of John Diefenbaker on the grounds of Parliament Hill would be a reminder to present and future Members of Parliament and future Governments, whether Conservative, Liberal or New Democratic, that he was a man who stood four-square for certain basic principles of human dignity, human freedom and human justice. His concern for the unfortunate, the weak, and minorities should be a reminder in future years to Members of Parliaments and Governments yet to come.

I support this motion, Mr. Speaker. I think it is fitting for us to have such a statue. One often talks about the ghost of John Diefenbaker and how this man has affected so many people's lives, particularly in the Province of Saskatchewan. You cannot go anywhere in Saskatchewan without hearing a story related to John Diefenbaker. I too have my little stories and experiences of John Diefenbaker. I mentioned one. The person who sponsored my family to Canada was the unsuccessful

Right Hon. John G. Diefenbaker

Liberal candidate running against John Diefenbaker in the riding of Lake Centre in 1949.

I remember as a youngster listening to John Diefenbaker in 1956 and in the 1957 election campaign in the Regina stadium. I listened to his full oratory. Even though I was a committed CCFer at that tender age, I still went to listen to this great orator deliver his thunderous speech and his damnation of those damn Liberals and damn interests on Bay Street. I was impressed then and am still impressed, Mr. Speaker. I hope members of the Conservative Party are still impressed with those damn interests on Bay Street.

The other little item came later in life. I met the good woman whom I had the great sense to marry, Lynda Pallen, through the press officer in charge of the train that carried the body of Mr. Diefenbaker back home to Saskatchewan.

Even though I only shook the man's hand once after that rally in Regina during the 1957 election, his ghost has touched me. I was just an immigrant boy in the Province of Saskatchewan, having moved there in 1951. Yet his influence and personality touched me in different ways, even though indirectly.

It is an honour for me to rise on behalf of my Party and of the people of Saskatchewan to urge that this Parliament accept this motion and urge the Government to act on this motion so that in the very near future we will have a fitting statue in memory of a great Canadian Prime Minister, John George Diefenbaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride and pleasure to speak for the first time in support of the motion before the House. I want to tell the House how proud and honoured I am to represent all the people in Saskatoon East. I chose to speak on this particular motion in support of my hon. colleague from Scarborough Centre (Mrs. Browes) because it is a subject of deep significance to me, both as a Saskatchewan native and as a Canadian.

In light of the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker's great contribution to Canada and Canadians, a statue in his honour is long overdue on Parliament Hill. I hope this will not be the last tribute we pay to this man because the country owes him a great deal. As the Member of Parliament for Saskatoon East, I have a strong affinity with Mr. Diefenbaker, as do the majority of my constituents. He was the only Prime Minister from my province, having been raised and educated there. As you know, he came from eastern Canada and settled in Saskatchewan in his early youth. He obtained his education at the University of Saskatchewan, as did I, which is the focal point of my constituency of Saskatoon East. He dedicated his whole life to representing the people of the Prairies in his legal and political career because he was, as is so often pointed out, one of us.

The people of Saskatoon East typify the multicultural makeup of the Prairies. These are people of many cultural