

Speech from the Throne

If in the performance of those duties I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me, and not to the Commons, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to Your Majesty's person at all seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from Your Majesty the most favourable construction.

The Honourable the Speaker of the Senate, addressing the Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons, then said:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by Her Majesty the Queen to declare to you that she freely confides in the duty and attachment of the House of Commons to Her Majesty's person and government, and not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, she grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Commons shall have ready access to Her Majesty upon all seasonable occasions, and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from her the most favourable construction.

Then Her Majesty the Queen was pleased to open parliament by a speech from the throne.

And the house being returned to the Commons chamber:

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to report that, the house having attended on Her Majesty the Queen in the Senate chamber, I informed Her Majesty that the choice of Speaker had fallen upon me, and, in your names and on your behalf, I made the usual claim for your privileges, which Her Majesty was pleased to confirm to you.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 1, respecting the administration of oaths of office.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the house that, when this house did attend Her Majesty the Queen this day in the Senate chamber, Her Majesty was pleased to make a speech to both houses of parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

I greet you as your Queen. Together we constitute the parliament of Canada. For the first time the representatives of the people of Canada and their sovereign are here assembled on the occasion of the opening of parliament. This is for all of us a moment to remember.

Parliamentary government has been fashioned by the wisdom of many centuries. Its justice, authority and dignity are cherished by men of good will. It

will be the high purpose of my ministers not only to preserve these qualities but to take steps to make both houses of this parliament more effective in the discharge of their responsibilities to the people of Canada.

You have come here to form this new parliament from across a great land, a land far wider than either of those older countries that first gave it birth. I am proud to contemplate the great heritage of this nation—the minerals, the forests, the lands, the waters, the sources of power and energy which fire your ever-growing industries. But I am more proud to contemplate the spirit and ideas which brought this country to nationhood, and now, drawing reinforcement and enrichment from many lands and peoples, have given Canada a national character peculiarly her own.

Yet in this age no nation can live unto itself. Through the overcast of international affairs the bright constellation of the commonwealth illumines our times. The continuing admission of nations newly guided to self-government both broadens and strengthens our diverse commonwealth as more of us come to share the great inheritance of those institutions and ideals which make our association a quiet but pervasive force for good in an unquiet world. This was manifest when the prime ministers of the commonwealth met in London last June to talk of great affairs; and again, only a few days ago when on Canada's invitation, the finance ministers met at Mont Tremblant and in a comradely spirit laid plans for a commonwealth trade and economic conference to take place next year.

A similar spirit has been evident in the Colombo plan, which is a part of the high venture of the peoples of south and southeast Asia as they move along the path of national development, and which my government will continue to support.

My ministers believe that Canada's active participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is essential for the preservation of peace. You will accordingly be asked to maintain modern defence forces in being which, together with those of our allies, will continue to act as a deterrent to attack upon any part of that alliance.

While Canada plays a full part in these particular associations, my ministers remain convinced that in the wider forum of the United Nations we must also continue to seek such agreements as will preserve security and bring about a wide measure of disarmament. Indeed we must continue to hope that through the United Nations the aspirations of men and women for peace and security will be fulfilled.

In domestic affairs my ministers look forward to meeting next month with the leaders of the provincial governments in order to discuss fiscal relations and to seek better understanding and arrangement of many aspects of our public finances.

In the legislative program to be laid before you, it is fitting that mention should first be made of measures to improve the lot of the senior members of our society. Accordingly you will be asked to increase old age security pensions and to shorten the period of residence required to qualify for them. Changes will be proposed in the terms of assistance offered to provincial governments to enable them to increase the payments to be made under the Old Age Assistance Act, the Blind Persons Act and the Disabled Persons Act to a corresponding level.

You will also be asked to increase the scale of war veterans allowances and to enlarge the groups to whom they are paid. Changes will also be proposed in several sections of the Pension Act.

In order to assure to the farmers of Canada a fair share of the national income, you will be asked to enact a measure to provide greater stability in the prices of their products. Every possible effort is now being made, and will continue