

Canadian Centennial

some of these problems brought to his attention on the local level he will be willing and ready to take a new look.

Mr. Alexander Best (Halton): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on the resolution now before us, and to speak for the first time in the house I should like to congratulate you, rather tardily I admit, on the high office and time-honoured traditions to which you have succeeded. Through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to congratulate the Speaker as well on the fine exercise of his powers, his great discretion and his very considerable humour and wide and human tolerance in the past eight weeks. Through you, sir, I would extend to the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, the gratitude of all members of the house for the vigour and dispatch with which they carried out their duties.

I could not talk further without referring to my predecessor in this house, Marion Sybil Bennett, member for Halton from August 10, 1953 until her death on November 12 just a year ago. Many of you knew her, valued her keen ability, her warm personality and glimpsed the unsurpassable bravery with which she faced her long and terrible illness. If I can bring to you only a fraction of her insight and her dedication to the affairs of this house, I will indeed be grateful and content.

I would suggest, sir, that the resolution before us today is somewhat deceptive in its implications. I have read it, and examined it a number of times. I have listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the various members who have spoken on it this afternoon. We have just heard the hon. member for Jasper-Edson (Mr. Yuill) and before him the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) who discussed various St. Lawrence seaway problems of considerable interest and made a number of suggestions, largely based on fact, which I would say contained much of interest. I would add, however, and I think hon. members on the government side of the house would certainly agree, that the statement of the hon. member for Laurier, that only consideration is required for this resolution, has in it a somewhat interesting meaning.

I can quite understand the reference by the hon. member for York West (Mr. Hamilton) to the abdication of our position of responsibility if we are prepared to accept the resolution. I feel that is just what we would be doing, and I noted the rather pious references to political considerations by the hon. member for Laurier when commenting on these suggestions. I would say that the resolution expresses the sentiments of all of

[Mr. Yuill.]

us, but in large part sentiments, and not ideas based on hard, sound thinking and constructive practice having regard to the way the resolution is couched at the present time.

The sentiments of our party are, that we could not support the idea of a committee which would take over in a rather vast and amorphous form functions of the house, the special committees, and of the cabinet, and to deal with all the matters that come within the breadth of this omnibus resolution. It has much of interest in it, but, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) said in speaking of other things the other day, it would make a caricature of parliament if we were to support it at this time.

I was interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) when introducing the resolution. The debt of all of us in this country to Sir John Alexander Macdonald is one that is well remembered. The hon. member mentioned that the resolution has been on the order paper for the past three or four sessions and quoted certain newspaper articles at some length. For instance, he referred to an article in the *Ottawa Journal* by Mr. Norman Smith in support of his contention that consideration should now be given. But I would draw to the attention of all hon. members that Mr. Norman Smith's article had to do with a plan for Canada's birthday and concerned planning for a specific occasion, for the observation of this anniversary, and not for a vast host of projects which come rightly within the responsibility of the government, the cabinet, and parliament working each day and each year in the next ten years.

That, to my mind, is the obvious and very conclusive difference in our thinking. This great omnibus resolution has tremendous sentimental appeal, but is put in such a manner that we could not possibly agree with it. I would be quite willing to say that we should have the Queen here, which would be a wonderful thing, that we should have the Olympic games, a NATO meeting and music festivals, but these are not the things mentioned in the resolution before us at the moment. The things to which I have referred should be matters for consideration by a definitely established anniversary committee.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre referred to a speech by the former prime minister at Hamilton, Ontario, last March and the somewhat, shall we say, coloured words of the *Toronto Daily Star*. But here again we are dealing with generalities and nothing but generalities and sentiments, which are common, of course, to Canadians