

The Address—Mr. R. Richardson

the support of his government, to move quickly on this. I have some agreement with members opposite that good work can be done in the voluntary sector, and it is time we found out about these concerns. It is time we found out specifically whether lotteries, for instance, have distorted the ability of the voluntary sector.

I asked questions on that of the last government. I have written to the new Secretary of State, and I am very pleased that he has replied saying he shares these concerns and will be pleased to explore this issue more fully. He is going to take it up with his cabinet colleagues. He has asked for my suggestions, and I have suggested he certainly should look into the social impact of lotteries.

Finally, in conclusion, I simply want to say culture is not an airy-fairy issue; it is the reality of Canada. Of course the regions have to maximize and reflect the reality to themselves, but we are more than regions and we are more than a community of communities. We are a nation, and each part of Canada helps to make up the greatness of the total, but each part must better learn of, understand, and appreciate the other parts. It is the sharing of the richness of diversity that leads to national maturity. It is the assurance of the opportunity for excellence to develop anywhere that guarantees artistic and cultural opportunity everywhere.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Robin Richardson (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, may I first most sincerely congratulate you on the unanimous selection of yourself for a difficult but most important post. I can think of no better person for this most respected position during what I am certain all hon. members will work for and pray will be a "Parliament of Reconciliation." I pledge to you my co-operation in this essential task.

● (1610)

Next, I extend the traditional and very sincere congratulations to the hon. member for Erie (Mr. Fretz) and the hon. member for Cardigan (Mr. MacDonald) who moved and seconded the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I should also like to refer to my predecessor, the member for the riding of Greenwood, Mr. Andrew Brewin, and pay a tribute to him. Mr. Brewin is a very fine gentleman, a respected parliamentarian who represented my district for 17 years and, in my opinion, he is a compassionate man and a great Canadian.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Richardson (Beaches): I hope to hold a reception for him later this year here on the Parliament Hill he loved so well, to which all of his many friends will be invited. I should like this House to know that Andrew Brewin is held in high regard and affection by many who, like myself, do not happen to share his political views.

I should also like to express my personal tribute to the memory of the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker who was well known to the Richardson family. As some hon. members

[Mr. Fleming.]

would know, my uncle, Burt Richardson, was Mr. Diefenbaker's chief of staff for several years in the early 1960's. Mr. Diefenbaker was a man of great moral integrity and personal courage—a man of strong Christian conviction—and my only regret is that I did not have the privilege to sit in this House with him as a member of this Thirty-first Parliament.

My sadness at the passing of Mr. Diefenbaker is only the human feeling of realizing a great man and former prime minister of the Canada we love is no longer with us. It is more than overcome by the knowledge that the present Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) and leader of this Progressive Conservative government is equally a man of great moral integrity and personal courage, who is willing and able to take the tough actions necessary to ensure a safe, prosperous and united Canada for all Canadians in the days, months and years ahead.

I propose in this speech, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the prospects for Canadian peace and prosperity raised in the Speech from the Throne and, in particular, to challenge all hon. members to work together to help restore morality and a sense of true values to public affairs. After all, Mr. Speaker, Parliament is the central forum of our country. It should set the tone of public life since its decisions are felt by every Canadian. Our greatest challenge, individually and collectively as members of Parliament, is to help rebuild public respect and confidence in government.

First, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few general remarks. At a moment like this when I am giving my first speech in this historic Parliament, I naturally think of the people in my own constituency. I think of the people of Beaches, as I am sure other hon. members think of their constituents, as the salt of the earth, and I hope I can justify the confidence they have placed in me as their federal representative.

I think particularly, Mr. Speaker, of the many people I met during the past two years of campaigning as I called from house to house, who have experienced and are experiencing the devastating effects of prolonged inflation. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the retired people trying to live on limited pensions, the working men and women whose life savings are being destroyed, the homemakers who face soaring food prices, the homeowners, merchants and other small business entrepreneurs who are being devastated by high interest rates, and the young people who are facing very uncertain job prospects.

I think also, Mr. Speaker, of the many people I met who are fed up with politics and government. I am sure other hon. members experienced the same thing. They are the people who are dismayed by corruption and scandal in high places; sick of being bought off with their own money; distressed and discouraged at red tape and remoteness of government, and downright angry about the taxes which now account at all levels of government for almost 50 per cent of all the earned income in Canada. Fifty per cent, Mr. Speaker! God only asks for 10 per cent; Caesar and his legions are not so easily satisfied.