

The Address—Mr. Foster

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I checked with the distinguished officers at the table. The only document that was tabled was the statement. I am informed by the officers at the table that the warrants themselves or copies thereof were not tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure this matter can be straightened out in due course.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, for some six days now the hon. member for Brant has been trying to get the Speaker's attention. Since he is neither a freshman member nor an old veteran, I wonder, before the emergency passes, whether Mr. Speaker could perhaps notice him tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Friday, January 12, consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Crouse (p. 245).

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algonia): Mr. Speaker, in rising to continue my speech on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne I wish, first of all, to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election as Speaker of this House. You have distinguished yourself in this position in the last two parliaments. You have shown courage and dedication by agreeing to accept this high office again. Whatever the difficulties of this parliament, and judging by the breakdown of the numbers in each party there will be many, your wisdom and firm hand will maintain the dignity and decorum of the House.

I also want to extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) on his election to the position of Deputy Speaker. I have confidence in him and count him as a friend. We spent several weeks together at an Interparliamentary Union conference in 1969. I believe that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the House have shown real wisdom in appointing him Deputy Speaker. It will require all the sagacity, good will, and humour that the Chair can muster to make this a productive House.

I consider it a great honour to be re-elected to represent Algonia in the House of Commons and I thank my constituents for this responsibility and the opportunity to serve them. Election campaigns bring a person in to close contact with many people in a compressed time frame, they are more effective than any other methods I know of. The excitement and celebration of winning an election campaign can only be justified by hard work both in this chamber and in the constituency.

I congratulate the mover and seconder of the address in reply. They have youth, vigour, and eloquence in both our

[Mr. Drury.]

official languages and show great promise of becoming competent Members of Parliament.

I am especially pleased that the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) was chosen because he comes from northern Ontario. We are often concerned that not enough attention is paid to northern Ontario. Part of this problem stems from the fact that we are from a "have-not" area of a "have" province. We have many problems similar to those of the western and eastern provinces, such as high transportation costs, declining population and slow economic growth. However, because we are part of a wealthy province our needs are not fully recognized either at the provincial or federal level in many instances.

This is brought home only too forcefully in the proposals of the Representation Commissioner which were published on December 27, 1972. These proposals suggest that there will be two fewer Members of Parliament to represent northern Ontario in the House of Commons. This means that ridings which are already too large will be larger. Members who now divide their time as carefully and fairly as possible between dozens of communities will have to add many more towns and villages. City Members of Parliament do not fully appreciate how much the smaller communities depend on their Member of Parliament to help them in making approaches to government with a maze of what might be considered small problems. In the totality of government expenditures they may be relatively small problems, but for these communities they are big and important matters concerning their progress and development. When I see the ridings enlarged in northern Ontario I am not concerned so much about the extra miles I will have to travel as with the fact that the members for such enlarged ridings will have relatively less time for each community. I am also concerned that the total impact of members from northern Ontario will be made by 10 members instead of the present 12. It seems to me that the Representation Commissioner in the final determination should consider these facts before reducing the total number of members in the north.

• (1200)

An important step was taken in 1969 to rectify the discrepancy between the north and south by the establishment of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the designation of northern Ontario as an area where special assistance was available. It is strange that the provincial government, with all its wealth and power, does not have special assistance available to the slow growth areas of the north.

The DREE program has been criticized by many during the recent election campaign as being ineffective. I want to see the program strengthened, improved and made more flexible. I think that the minimum size for enterprises which can qualify for incentive grants should be reduced. I am pleased to see that the department is to be decentralized as this should bring it closer to the areas to be served. It will make personal consultation and discussion possible.

I was pleased to read in the Speech from the Throne as well that there will be improved assistance to strengthen management and consulting services for small businesses along with improved access to financing facilities. It is a