

Welcome to New Leader of Opposition

house taking part in public debate and expressing the views of their party on important public issues. The second reason is that with the closing of coal mines and steel plants in Nova Scotia we thought it would be better to get him out of the province before he wrecked the joint.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Just as happened with Saskatchewan.

Mr. Douglas: We thought it would be preferable to get the hon. gentleman into the House of Commons where the only thing he could wreck would be the Tory party; and in that endeavour he will have our wholehearted co-operation. He cannot expect any help from the government, because they are busy wrecking the economy of the country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Douglas: In a more serious vein, I wish to extend on behalf of our group our heartiest congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition on his election as leader of his party, and to welcome him to the House of Commons. If I might add a personal note, I had the privilege of working with him at one or two federal-provincial conferences. I know him to be a man of high dedication, good judgment and sound common sense. As Leader of the Opposition he takes on a heavy responsibility. From his past record and from my brief association with him I am convinced that he will discharge his responsibilities in a manner which will bring credit to himself, distinction to his party and benefit to the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the members of this party would not miss the opportunity to add a few words of welcome to those addressed by the right hon. Prime Minister to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) to whom we should like to say that we have followed attentively the evolution of his party, particularly the selection made the supporters of a democratic government in his riding.

We most sincerely congratulate the new Leader of the Opposition and wish him to work with all the parties in the house for the future of Canada, which means that we assume the opposition will work seriously

[*Mr. Douglas.*]

and constructively, not negatively. On the other hand, our party will always stand ready to co-operate with the other parties toward the objective of all Canadians, that is the progress of the country through ever more advanced, ever more sincere legislation for the economic development of the country.

I trust that the new Leader of the Opposition will bring to this parliament a constructive factor, and I am sure that if we all work hand in hand in the house, we shall succeed in an action not likely to destroy Canadian unity but to make it stronger still.

[*English*]

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, as yesterday we joined in words of good wishes to the hon. member for Ontario, so today we join in welcoming the Leader of the Opposition as he takes his seat in the House of Commons. We as parliamentarians have a common responsibility and face a tremendous challenge. To the extent that we can work together in the interest of the nation and the solution of its problems, this responsibility rests on us all. If the Leader of the Opposition can use his influence to give direction, and if he can point the way for the leaders of his party to play a constructive role in this house, then to that extent we shall be in his debt. In this way we join in the expressions of welcome to him this afternoon.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I need hardly tell you, and through you the members of this house, what a privilege it is for me to take my seat today as a member of the House of Commons. Though I have been accustomed to sitting in a legislature or parliament of somewhat greater antiquity, nevertheless I am aware of my great privilege in being finally in this house.

● (2:50 p.m.)

It would be a privilege in any circumstances; it is a tremendous pleasure for me to enter this chamber as the Leader of the Opposition under your Speakership, sir; to sit in a chamber presided over by a Speaker of such tact, humour and firmness. I think a member of an opposition is always aware of the importance of the Speaker and my first duty is to pay my respects to you, sir, as I now do, and to assure you that I will always wish to co-operate and do nothing to increase