

*Right Hon. John G. Diefenbaker*

It should be noted as well that Mr. Diefenbaker's commitment to freedom and human rights extended beyond the borders of Canada and the Commonwealth of nations. He had a deep faith in the United Nations and saw its potential for enhancing human rights throughout the world. In his 1960 address to that body, he told the world that freedom and democracy were not and should not be the exclusive property of countries as fortunate as Canada. Freedom, he said, belonged to the people of Eastern Europe as well. In campaigning for this office last summer I found it significant that so many people of Eastern European origin reminded me of Mr. Diefenbaker's commitment to their homelands.

Finally, I would like to discuss the document that I know Mr. Diefenbaker considered his greatest achievement, namely, the Canadian Bill of rights. This document was the expression of his lifelong commitment to freedom from the time of his election as leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party in 1936, until its realization in 1960. On introducing that legislation he said:

The cynics will say it does not go far enough; it is a first step. As the Chinese say, every journey by mankind, even a journey over a thousand years, begins with just one step taken by some individual who sees the possibilities for the future and tries to make it possible to equalize the opportunities for those of his own generation. The Bill will not do everything, but I do think fairminded Canadians will agree that is a major step forward.

Fittingly, he moved second reading of the Bill on Dominion Day, and it became the law of the land on August 10, 1960.

I am reminded of an incident that occurred during my recent election campaign, Mr. Speaker. During an all candidates' debate, I had just completed my remarks when I was told by someone in the audience, in an accusatory fashion, "That's all well and good, but you have to remember, Mr. Nicholson, that you are a part of the same Party as John Diefenbaker". I told the truth then, Mr. Speaker, as I tell this Chamber the truth today: There are very few things in my life of which I am more proud than to say I am a member of the Party of the late John George Diefenbaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nicholson:** I believe it has always been appropriate that we in Canada have honoured those Prime Ministers who have served their country well. I know Canadians were pleased when Toronto International Airport was renamed in honour of the late Lester B. Pearson. I know many Canadians can take pride in the fact that a statue to Louis St. Laurent resides at the Supreme Court of Canada. I also know this: there is no stamp that could be issued, no park that could be dedicated, no building that could be renamed, no honour that could be bestowed that would give the late John Diefenbaker more satisfaction than to have his statue erected here on Parliament Hill, outside the institution that he so loved and to which he dedicated his life.

I would ask that this House give unanimous approval to this motion, that we give to Mr. Diefenbaker the recognition and the expression of thanks for all that he has said and done in favour of Canadians.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, take great pleasure in rising on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party to support the motion in front of us today. I think all Members of this House, regardless of political Party, will recognize the tremendous contribution that the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker made to the history and life of this country and this House of Commons.

It is particularly important for me to rise in my seat since it appears that I am the only representative from the Province of Saskatchewan to speak this afternoon on this resolution. John Diefenbaker remains a hero in Saskatchewan. He is of a period of time which saw several political greats coming out of my home Province of Saskatchewan. The Liberal Party had Mr. Jimmy Gardiner, the Conservative Party had John Diefenbaker, and the New Democratic Party, or the CCF at that time, of course, had Tommy Douglas. Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Douglas particularly, were great orators and tremendous politicians. I would say that Jimmy Gardiner was also a great politician. It was a type of politics that was unique in its time and place. All three of these outstanding politicians had within them that prairie populism, tremendous oratory and tremendous parliamentary debating skills. They all had a good sense of humour. It was a type of politics which I do not think we see today, and I doubt if ever again we will see people of the calibre of the great men we saw back then.

When I rise in my seat in support of this resolution, I speak not only on behalf of my colleagues in the NDP, but I think I speak on behalf of all the people of the Province of Saskatchewan in urging the House to adopt this motion. We in Saskatchewan consider John Diefenbaker one of our own. His family moved to Saskatchewan in 1903. He must have been around eight or nine years old at that time and he lived in Saskatchewan all his life thereafter, mainly residing in Saskatoon. He attended the University of Saskatchewan, achieving his BA in 1915, his Masters in 1916 and his law degree in 1919. He saw service overseas and in fact became the first Prime Minister to have been on active duty with the Canadian forces overseas. He became an outstanding lawyer in the Province of Saskatchewan. Even today you hear stories from men and women in Saskatchewan who remember him dealing with court cases in our province.

Through that time he must have developed a tremendous sense of the importance of the rule of law and of fair treatment. He generally defended the underdog, and he was quite successful as a lawyer. He defended some 20 murder cases and saved quite a few men from the gallows. It is perhaps as a result of his experience that he became such a strong opponent of capital punishment. As a lawyer in Saskatchewan, he defended schools which were teaching French. At that time there was strong anti-French feeling in and about parts of Saskatchewan and he was a strong defender of those individual rights.

His political experience was at first not all that successful. He tried getting elected for some 15 years, running in federal and provincial elections, and was even defeated by a few votes,