

**Mr. Fisher:** When a minister has expressed himself to a newspaper reporter—the words are “much to the chagrin of agriculture minister Alvin Hamilton”—I should like to put a proposition to you in terms of relevancy, Mr. Speaker. If a minister has, within the last few days, expressed to a reporter chagrin at the government’s legislative program, what are we to do but ask him a question about it?

**Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Agriculture):** I rise on a question of privilege. I have never expressed chagrin to any person, now or in the past, on this subject.

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Monday, October 1, consideration of the motion of Mr. Gordon Chaplin 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. Pearson.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** Last evening at the time of the adjournment I was dealing with the question of minority governments on which the Leader of the Opposition placed so much emphasis. So that the record might be a true one I thought it proper that I place on *Hansard* the various occasions when in Canada, under a Liberal government, there was a minority vote of the people of Canada. In 1921, as I said, the Liberal party had 41.5 per cent; in 1925, 40.1 per cent; in 1935, 43.9 per cent; in 1945, 41.4 per cent. In 1957 we had a minority vote of 39 per cent and in the same year the Liberal party had 42.3 per cent.

In 1958 the Liberal party fell to 33.7 per cent, the lowest percentage in all its history over a period of 90 years. When the hon. gentleman talks about the resurgence of Liberalism in Canada, may I point out that in this election the Liberal party went above that level by approximately 3.6 per cent, and outside of 1958 had the lowest percentage in the history of the Liberal party since 1887. That to me is an answer to the resurgence of which he speaks; the record has also to speak.

I was very much interested in what he had to say regarding the making of appointments on the part of a minority government. I point out that in 1957 there was no complaint in that connection. He referred to what the late

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prime minister of Canada, Mr. King, did in 1925. It is well to recollect that in 1925 the Liberal party was a minority of minorities. It was in this position; it fell in membership from 118 to 101, the Conservatives more than doubled their membership from 50 to 116, and 24 Progressives were elected. According to my understanding of history—that is, until it was revised by one who at the moment is going to remain unidentified—Mr. King went to Lord Byng and said that he wanted to stay in office until parliament met, even though he had a minority, with 15 seats less than the Conservatives. Lord Byng said he would allow him to stay provided that he made no appointments. That was the difference in the situation then and now, and in no way does that occasion and what took place then assist the official opposition in the argument that they have advanced.

I am not going into the incidents of 1925.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** For obvious reasons.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Eugene Forsey did that. Also, if the hon. gentleman wants to look at the record, I would suggest that he read the letters of the late Senator Murphy, a former member of Mr. King’s administration, in which he dealt with that period and the circumstances connected with Mr. King’s dissertation to his government.

Mr. Speaker, I started off last evening without performing a function that is part and parcel of the application of the amenities of parliament. It is one thing about which I am able to agree with the Leader of the Opposition, and that is the expression of congratulations to the hon. member for Waterloo South and the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska. I doubt whether there is a more trying, but at the same time more thrilling, experience than to be either the mover or the seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. It has always been the same through the years. Everyone making his maiden speech in parliament goes through an experience that is almost beyond description.

Both these hon. members, however, spoke in a manner befitting the honour that was directed to them and their constituencies. The mover, as the Leader of the Opposition said so well, has a great tradition of service before him. In the succession from father to son, we have the example of a highly respected businessman accepting responsibility and sacrifice for service in public affairs. Yet another example of that is in an appointment to the cabinet; one of the leading businessmen in this country who, in order to serve, has had to make tremendous sacrifices. These things represent the epitome of good citizenship. I congratulate the mover.