

The Address—Mr. Douglas

Mr. Diefenbaker: What date was that?

Mr. Pearson: Canadians want us in this house to speak for Canada in the name of our two official language groups. It is here that we can call upon Canadians of both languages to give joint and effective leadership in the affairs of Canada. Let us not forget that the people of Quebec are represented, and well represented, in this House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: Let us speak and act without ambiguity and without provocation about the major Canadian problems of our national unity, of the part to be played by French speaking Canadians in the effective conduct of our country. This government is committed, and has been committed since it took office—and has accepted and tried to discharge that commitment—to a policy of partnership and full participation. We want the new and dynamic Quebec to play its full and honoured part in the development of a new and proud Canada. Let us build together a Canada which can adjust its thinking in order to meet the new challenges of our society, while safeguarding the moral values and traditions we have already acquired. This is how we must build our country if we wish to realize the great destiny that can be Canada's as we approach our second century as a nation.

It may seem very important now to us, Mr. Speaker, in this chamber, but in the long record of history it will not matter much which government or which party was in power when Canada entered into its second century, or who was the leader of that government. It will matter much—indeed it could be decisive for Canada's future, whatever position we may hold, whatever responsibilities we may have—if we do not act to the very best of our ability to exploit every chance we may get, to use every quality we may possess in serving Canada as we face up to and in the end meet the challenges ahead.

We will then be judged in this parliament, Mr. Speaker, by our deeds and not by our words. I hope that on this basis the judgment will be a favourable one for the twenty seventh parliament.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with both the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) in extending heartiest congratulations to the mover and seconder of the

[Mr. Pearson.]

address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and say that I am sure it is the opinion of all hon. members of the house that they discharged their responsibilities yesterday in a manner that brought credit both to themselves and to their constituencies.

After millions of words of forensic oratory last September and October, and after millions of dollars of public expenditure, we are back here at the same old stand in a parliament whose composition is not too greatly different from its predecessor. Once more we have a parliament of minorities. It is rather significant that four out of the last five parliaments have been ones in which there was a minority government.

In the recent election the New Democratic party took the position that minority government was not necessarily bad, and majority government was not necessarily good; that we had had minority governments which had succeeded in placing progressive legislation on the statute books, and that we had had majority governments that had settled into a state of arrogance and apathy. It really depends upon the attitude of both the government and the opposition, and I mean all opposition parties, as to whether progress can be achieved in a house of minorities.

The New Democratic party believes that the people of Canada want parliament to attend to the nation's business with a minimum of political manoeuvring and partisan bickering. There is a great backlog of work from the last parliament, plus the business which has been announced in the Speech from the Throne. This will call for a maximum effort if this parliament is to be effective and efficient.

On behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic party, we pledge ourselves to co-operate in expediting the work of this session. However, that does not mean that the dislike of an election should be used by the government as an excuse for sinking into apathy, nor should it prevent hon. members from seeking an expression of opinion from the house on vital and essential questions affecting the well-being of the Canadian people. In a multi-party parliament we shall have to find some way of working out government by consensus.

The New Democratic party does not believe that an expression of opinion contained in an amendment to the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, or an amendment to the budget, or a supply motion necessarily or inherently constitutes a motion of no confidence. There have been instances