

The Address—Mr. Pearson

brought forward but they undoubtedly discharged their task to the satisfaction of their colleagues, and I take it that was their chief objective in discharging this honourable responsibility. I should like also to congratulate them on the skill of their brick-building with the straw that was available to them.

I should also like to congratulate the hon. member who has been appointed Deputy Speaker of the house, and I do that in a very sincere way. I feel sure that he will discharge his important and honourable function with fairness, impartiality and intelligence—those qualities, Mr. Speaker, which you have exhibited to such a high degree in your occupancy of the chair.

I should like to congratulate my hon. friend from Quebec South (Mr. Flynn), on his elevation to the cabinet as Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, and those other hon. members who have been made parliamentary secretaries or have been given other distinctions.

The Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys must have been highly flattered by all the publicity given to his appointment to the cabinet. Perhaps, however, his satisfaction in this regard may have been modified by the realization that the attention which was centred on Quebec at this particular time was not exclusively devoted, I feel sure, to his promotion. There is no doubt that more was expected than even this important promotion—especially by the press—because of officially inspired and officially sponsored speculation.

We have in Canada today a government and a Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) who seem to enjoy giving birth to speculations and then to destroy their own speculative infants. Hence, Mr. Speaker, the fiasco of the deluxe pilgrimage to Quebec with private cars, aeroplanes and attendant officials, and all the panoply of an expectant press which is so flattering to the ego of ministers. What a circus performance that turned out to be, with a result, I think it is fair to say, that could have been achieved quietly and inexpensively in Ottawa.

What did it all accomplish, in this time of difficulties, deficits and very serious problems? The verdict of one member of the press gallery in connection with the accomplishments of this trip—the parliamentary correspondent of the *Globe and Mail*—had this to say when writing on January 3 of this year. I quote from Mr. Walter Gray's column:

The attendant publicity, and the Prime Minister's statements over press speculation—which the press maintains was originated by Mr. Diefenbaker himself—has left a cloud of foul air over parliament hill.

As it happened, this double-shuffle ended in a "no deal" and all the ministers sit—though perhaps somewhat less easily—on the

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same front benches who were there previously. It was merely another chapter in the record of a government which prefers agitation to administration, surface excitement to sober results.

The circumstances surrounding the distribution of the throne speech seem to have been part of the same pattern—

An hon. Member: Pessimism.

Mr. Pearson: I am thinking of the delay in giving it out to the press until it was actually produced in the other place, which provoked—

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. gentleman allow a question?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member received a confidential copy in the usual way. Did he respect the confidentiality of that document, or did he make it available to others?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I received a copy of the speech around two o'clock in the afternoon on which it was delivered. It has been the custom to do that. I am grateful to the Prime Minister for that courtesy, although in earlier years I have received it a little earlier; but I am not complaining about that. I observed the appropriate security arrangements in regard to that speech.

I am now talking about the alteration of a custom to give advance copies to the press. The delay in doing so has, as perhaps it was meant to do, provoked some very startling rumours indeed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. gentleman a simple question? Did the hon. gentleman deliver to anyone the confidential document that was handed to him?

Mr. Pearson: I acted with perfect propriety in this regard, something which it may be difficult for the Prime Minister always to understand. There was a reason for this delay. This is not an important matter in itself. The reason may have been a last minute excision of a paragraph; it may have been merely the fact that the government did not get around to taking action, or it may have been a way of showing some form of displeasure at the attitude of the press. But whatever the reason, the delay did cause a great deal of speculation and this was no doubt all part of the electoral war of nerves which is going on at the present time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Does the hon. member remember that Mr. King did the same thing?