

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 6, 1973

The House met at 11 a.m.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO PRIME MINISTER ON FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AS LEADER OF LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. J. E. Walker (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, there are some occasions of special significance and importance which are allowed to be noted in the House from time to time. Just a few days ago we all joined in sincere tribute to the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) on the 33rd anniversary of his election to parliament. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have acclaimed Your Honour and others at relevant times.

Today is one of those relevant occasions for some of us in this chamber because it was exactly five years ago that the Liberal party selected for itself a new leader supremely fitted for the task of leading his political party—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Walker:—and the country through the difficult and challenging days that lay ahead. Building on the solid base of an awakening Canadianism that had been generated by his immediate prime ministerial predecessors, Pierre Elliott Trudeau has worked every waking hour to forge a conscious Canadian identity and unity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, some question his methods but none can challenge his motives or dedication to this task to which every political leader is committed.

In a spirit of political generosity I believe all hon. members would wish to join with us on this side of the House in wishing the Prime Minister good health, good spirits and good will in the task that every Prime Minister faces, the furthering of national unity in a Canada where every Canadian will be at home.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to associate myself with the good wishes to the Prime Minister regarding his health.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I called across to him earlier, before I realized there was going to be speech-making in connection with this anniversary, that sometimes it is said about other institutions that the first five years are the hardest, and that may well be his wish.

Ordinarily one does not make very much of a third, fourth or fifth anniversary, but I can well understand the

desire of my hon. friends opposite—of course I am not referring to the Prime Minister—to note this anniversary at this time because it may be their last opportunity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, of course I join others in wishing the Prime Minister well and in congratulating him on five years of hard work. When I listened to the hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Walker) telling us that the Prime Minister worked every hour of the day for the last five years, it occurred to me that perhaps that was the reason for some of the things that have happened. Perhaps the Prime Minister ought to work less from now on. Mr. Speaker, we wish him well in his personal future.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Once again, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for the warm welcome they extended to me this morning upon my return to the House. It is not my fifth anniversary but I join all my colleagues in wishing the right hon. Prime Minister good health, specially from the political point of view. I hope he will call an election on the double that we may try to act quickly and efficiently as legislators. I join the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), the government members, the NDP members and my own colleagues in wishing the right hon. Prime Minister well, that he may continue to do his utmost for the well-being of the people, regardless of their political affiliations, and to act as a true Prime Minister of Canada.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in acknowledging the compliments I have received this morning, I should like to say to you that I appreciate the thought that anniversaries can really come up quite often in the House.

I wish to apologize to my colleagues for not having the ease of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) when it comes to expressing thanks on the occasion of anniversaries. With the years, however, I trust I shall improve, and I thank my colleagues from all parties for their great kindness and confidence.

• (1110)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I am not one, as you know, who is very enthusiastic about recalling or celebrating various anniversaries. I know that you have some question in your mind about how much time we should spend doing this. I have, as you know, in the past done my best to suppress some of my own anniversaries, and I hope you will not find me too guilty. Let me just say thank you very much to all hon. members.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!