

Mr. Johnston: The constituencies are vast. So far as I can see, any new proposals for redistribution do not appear to go to the root of the problem for us, the representatives from British Columbia. I agree with Mr. Stewart who gave as his reason for retiring the strain of the task. The experience of six years should not be abandoned because of those difficulties. However, I sympathize with him wholeheartedly. I trust that redistribution will proceed and that it will accomplish something.

One of the other interesting proposals that have been put forward in the Speech from the Throne is that the debates in this chamber be televised. I find this proposal interesting and amusing because, as long as six years ago, when I was here previously this matter was being raised as something that simply had to be done and that would somehow contribute to democracy in this land. I was interested to hear the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) make some reference to it a week or two ago suggesting that he would recommend the televising of this chamber's proceedings. I would like to warn him against that course which I opposed six years ago, and will continue to oppose now.

I have always been an admirer of the colour of the hair of that hon. member for Eglinton, but I do not think that he will be any match for Betty Kennedy when he appears on "Front Bench Challenge", nor do I believe that the ratings for such a program would surpass the ratings for the existing program of which Canadians have grown so fond through the years. Even if we called such a program "Talky Night in Canada" I do not think that its ratings would be anywhere near those of the programs broadcast by that great Canadian institution which has allowed us to follow the Team Canada series in the past few weeks.

I happen to believe in the representative system of parliamentary democracy. I think it is the best guarantee of freedom that any country in this world can have, and I believe it should stand on its own as something good and worthwhile. I think that the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in his 1968 campaign in particular, did an enormous amount of harm to democracy in Canada by talking about participatory democracy, which led many people to believe that somehow the television set could link people more closely and provide something in the nature of a direct democracy such as was known in ancient Greece where democracy was born.

I do not believe that, Madam Speaker. I believe that the people of this country elect their representatives to get on with the business of government. Although they may watch the process, they want to get on with the business of living their lives at the same time. I find any suggestion that television will improve the nature of the deliberations of this House strange indeed. Television, as Professor McLuhan says, is entertainment, but our purpose here is to legislate.

The right hon. Prime Minister in his speech on leader's day said that the important task of this House is the debating of legislation. This is our aim, not to entertain. That is not why we are assembled here. I will have more to say on the subject later, particularly on any attempt to change basically the nature of our parliamentary system, because that is what television does to everything that it touches; it changes it. I do not think we should allow that

The Address—Mr. Milne

change to be undertaken lightly, nor do I think we need to allow it to be understaken at all.

I am particularly disappointed that the speech which we heard from the right hon. Prime Minister contained hardly any mention of the problem of inflation. The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin), who preceded me, quoted poetry to the House. I also would like to quote a line of poetry. It comes from Kenneth McRobbie. The poem is very aptly called "Changing the Constitution" and it can be found in the August 1974 issue of the Canadian Forum. The line should answer the question of anybody who listened to the right hon. Prime Minister and asked after the speech: what did he say about inflation? It reads "nothing you could give a name to or glimpse in plain daylight". I would recommend the reading of the poem to the right hon. Prime Minister and indeed to any member of the House.

One of the things that I noted with particular pleasure in the Speech from the Throne was the suggestion that "O Canada" would be made our national anthem in the full legal sense, and it pleases me that the first reading of that bill was given in the House.

I worked on the committee considering the national anthem six years ago. That committee worked long and hard. At one of its earlier sessions I suggested that all we really had to do was to accept the French language version of the anthem and slightly amend the English version. I am afraid the committee was a bit carried away and we ended up having another contest in which Canadians were asked to write another national anthem. We waded through some 600 suggestions that were forwarded to us. In the end, however, we accepted the French language version as it was, and slightly amended the English. I feel that this bill should receive a speedy passage through the House, and I trust that all members of all parties will agree to it.

● (1630)

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity of again addressing the House of Commons and serving my country. I am proud and pleased that my constituents have chosen to send me here. I have spoken before on behalf of my constituency and province, and it gives me great joy, Madam Speaker, to have returned to this great institution.

Mr. Ross Milne (Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise and address this House for the first time, and particularly to do so on behalf of the people of Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe. I am sure each and every one of them would join with me in congratulating the Speaker and his very able assistants on their appointments. I know all three will have the support of members on all sides of the House.

Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe is a very unique constituency. It contains, I suppose, one of the fastest growing urban areas in all North America in the Brampton-Bramalea area. I think Bramalea is a model for some of the new cities that will be built across Canada.

The riding as well has a very rich agricultural industry and the towns of Alliston and Orangeville are dependent upon it. In addition, my riding has a large military base at Camp Borden. So, Madam Speaker, it is a real privilege