

*The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker*

enthusiasm which they expressed for the contents of the speech from the throne.

I do not raise this by way of any objection whatsoever, but I think the course which has been followed through the years, with one exception in 1958, is one that deserves to be continued, namely that on the opening day the Governor General gives his speech on behalf of the government and on the day following the mover and seconder deliver their speeches. That enables a full and complete examination to be made of the subject matter of the speech, something which becomes very difficult when only a matter of a few hours is made available. I repeat that I am not raising any objection except to say I think it would have benefited complete and comprehensive discussion of the speech from the throne had that course been followed, even though it would have meant that the debate would not have been completed before the Easter recess.

On this occasion I do not intend to go into great detail regarding the legislative program. Other members will deal with particular subjects. However, I intend to review some portions of it and, if the Prime Minister will allow me to borrow his expression, I shall be taking a measured pause while he replies to me, so that some of the matters in connection with the speech from the throne may be more fully explained than they have been. Then I hope to have the privilege on a sub-amendment, if one is moved, of dealing with some of the arguments which the Prime Minister will be making.

• (3:20 p.m.)

I wish to say at once that any suggestions the government may advance for the purpose of making parliament more effective will, as always, receive my support. Parliament has suffered a great deal in reputation over the past two years. That is unfortunate, but the reason for it is clear and undoubted; it is that the government has failed to properly arrange the business of the house and has stumbled from fiasco to fiasco. Indeed, when mention is made of the auto parts agreement, there is only one part of it which would appeal to the government, namely the instrument which would provide for automatic reversing of the positions taken by hon. gentlemen opposite; because it is axiomatic that the house can always look forward with anticipation to a withdrawal, amendment or substitution with regard to each and every policy of any importance which is brought before parliament.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

I realize that the government say the reason more was not done during the recent session was because of obstruction. Well, anyone who holds that view has only to read the speech from the throne in which the government places in the mouth of the Governor General its views regarding the effectiveness of the session just ended, the second session of the twenty sixth parliament. From page to page in the course of that speech the Governor General sets out in detail the large amount of legislation which was placed on the statute books and the effective action taken by parliament during that session. I think it is well to read this; I do not intend to quote it in detail. It gives its own answer. Parliament suffers, but the reason for it is the countless follies of a government which has been accident prone from the first day it took over the administration of our country.

We have taken the stand, and we shall continue to take the stand, that when legislation which is beneficial is introduced we shall support it. We shall ask for changes and amendments. We have a responsibility to discharge, as we had on Friday last when as a result of the strong stand taken by Her Majesty's loyal opposition this government was prevented from securing the passage of amendments to statutes through the subtle means of supplementary estimates. We put an end to that, and I hope it is ended for all time to come.

We shall do what we can, each of us having a great responsibility in this regard, to make sure that parliament is made as effective as it is possible to make it without private members having their rights sacrificed or subverted in any way, and without the loss of the parliamentary mission. I know there are many who think that parliament should operate as a business. That is what Hitler thought. That is what Mussolini thought.

I know there are many who feel there should not be an opposition. Mr. Speaker, where there is no opposition, there you have dictatorship. Sometimes you get dictatorship even with an opposition, when a government refuses to give information. We had an example of this today in connection with that great force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I asked a question in this regard. The responsible minister apparently has not talked to the Prime Minister about it. This is not the first time the Minister of Justice has failed to tell the Prime Minister of anything. If there is no foundation for the reports which have been appearing, then all I can