

*The Address—Mr. Laflamme*

to be paid on purchases such as these and I hope the government will take a really hard look at this situation.

In conclusion, I hope the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) will send a note over to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) before five o'clock suggesting to him that he make a decision with regard to pensions for our older citizens. He could do it; there is still time. Then he would be able to stand up and vote with the courage of his convictions.

I have a little green book here which will become the bible of the Liberal party if members opposite are not careful. It is called Commonsense for Canadians and it was written by the hon. member for Red Deer. I want to quote these words from it:

Except perhaps in times of national emergency, I believe the most obvious characteristic of Canadian federal politics has been a lack of courage, and a lack of effectiveness.

I suggest that never will a man be given greater opportunity to fulfil his words of wisdom and place his name in the history of Canada than will be given the hon. member for Red Deer later on this afternoon to back up his convictions with his vote, which is what parliament is all about.

• (3:20 p.m.)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ovide Laflamme (Québec-Montmorency):** I think it is only fitting, Mr. Speaker, that I begin by telling you how glad I am to see you in the chair.

You belong to that race of men determined, modest, dedicated and capable whose sole ambition is to serve.

To me you represent a valuable product of Canada's biethnic character.

I should like to extend my own congratulations to the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, the hon. member for Dollard (Mr. Goyer) and the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury).

The worthy fashion in which they performed this function highly justifies the confidence put in them by their respective constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people, in less than nine years, have been asked to elect a new Parliament five times, namely in 1957, 1958, 1962, 1963 and 1965.

In 1957, the Conservative party came to power and formed a minority government. I was here at the time. After eight months in power without being defeated, barely a month after our present leader was appointed

[Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson).]

head of our party, the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), who was prime minister at that time, asked and obtained that Parliament be dissolved, and called an election for March 31, 1958. We could then rightly ask ourselves why those elections were called. I feel we can say it was solely to seek an absolute majority. And so, the interest of the party took precedence over that of the country, for there were indications of an economic recession at the time.

In 1962, after other general elections, regular ones, that time a minority government was to be formed by the present Leader of the Opposition. It would be pointless to recite the consequences of the Conservative regime: unemployment, deficits, decrease in the national production, etc.—not to mention the resignation of several ministers, a lack of leadership, confusion, and a concerted effort of all parties to overthrow the government.

I am not aware that at that time the defeated prime minister ever asked the Governor General to turn over the administration of the country to the Liberal party who had almost as many members. Once again he asked for and was granted the dissolution of parliament, less than nine months after the previous election.

The election that was then called returned to power a minority Liberal government, seven seats short of the majority.

Had not that Liberal government worked for two and a half years in the circumstances we are familiar with, to conduct the business of the country by proposing a host of measures to increase the economic growth, adopting measures to promote a purely Canadian spirit and character, while at the same time pushing for a fiscal decentralization in favour of the provinces, and also for a clear and fruitful orientation toward interdependence of the federal and provincial governments, the very foundation of a new federalism that some politicians stood against, even before knowing what it might achieve.

After two and a half years of systematic obstruction in the house by the opposition, the leader of our party was granted the dissolution of parliament to get a clear mandate, an absolute majority. The people did not unanimously give him that mandate, although he came to within three seats of the majority.

We can say, I think, that during the last general election, the various tendencies have been channelled, and, with of course a few exceptions, we have been able to measure