

The Address—Rt. Hon. John Turner

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It is good to know that in this country a man from humble yet honourable beginnings can aspire to the highest office in this country. He is entitled this day to some personal reflections, some private thoughts of satisfaction and pride, and for this he would be fully excused. A great responsibility has been laid upon his shoulders by the people of Canada, and to respond to that, I wish him courage and good health. I need not wish him much more because I understand he has told his closest aides that he is going to govern as if he had a majority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): May I, Mr. Speaker, also congratulate the Hon. Member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. James) and the Hon. Member for Montreal-Mercier (Mrs. Jacques) who were the mover and seconder respectively of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

[*Translation*]

Both Members spoke eloquently and frankly about what we expect of this new legislature, and I wish to congratulate them on their contribution. Having been in the same position many years ago, I am fully aware of the importance of a Member's maiden speech in the House, and I think the Hon. Members did a remarkably good job. I trust we shall have further occasion to hear them in the House during this session.

[*English*]

We are here, Mr. Speaker, for a purpose greater than partisan loyalties. We are here to defend and preserve the democratic institutions of this country, of which this House is by far the most important. A former Opposition Leader and Prime Minister, the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker, had this to say in this House. These are his words:

Mr. Speaker, this institution must not fail. Without it there is no freedom. We are here today not only as the custodians of the present and the inheritors of the past, but Mr. Speaker, we are here as well as the hope of this institution's future.

On behalf of the members of my caucus, I promise you, Mr. Speaker, that we will uphold what Mr. Diefenbaker had in mind. But I promise you and the members of the Government that we will be a strong and vigilant Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): As a matter of fact, when the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) and I first entered this House of Commons we were in opposition. We have some experience of what that role is. We interpret our position here as recognizing that the people of Canada did accord to the Right Hon. Prime Minister and his colleagues and supporters a massive mandate. But such was the nature of what they said, what they undertook and what they promised, so vague were those undertakings, that we do not extend that approval to any particular piece of legislation and we undertake to examine with care every Bill which comes before this House. If it is good legislation, it will have our approval and pass quickly. If we believe it needs improvement, then we will propose changes and amendments. If we feel it is not in the

best interests of the people of Canada, we will oppose it and oppose it vigorously. I might add that we will not oppose just for the sake of opposing. We do not propose to be, as was contemplated by the Prime Minister in an interview he gave to Val Sears of *The Toronto Star*, "purely destructive".

I represent a political party which is a party of reform and innovation, a party of openness, with a willingness to experiment with new ideas. We will respect the rights of the individual and the rule of law. We will defend the social contract. We will work to preserve our social programs with special attention to those in greatest need. I want to remind the Prime Minister that he said during the election campaign, and I use his words, that universal social programs are "a sacred trust not to be tampered with". We on this side of the House, the Official Opposition, will hold him to that particular commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I have said before and I say again in this House that I will not stand by, nor will my colleagues, and watch the social programs built up by successive Liberal Governments being dismantled in the name of economic expediency.

[*Translation*]

Liberals respect the right of every individual Canadian to develop to his or her greatest potential. We believe in equality of opportunity and access to education, training and job opportunities regardless of family background, colour, creed or sex. My colleagues and I believe in providing the widest possible scope for individual initiative and reward for success. But we also believe fundamentally in protection for those who need help or suffer through no fault of their own.

[*English*]

Liberalism, Mr. Speaker, believes strongly in private enterprise but holds that governments should play a positive role in the marketplace where private capital cannot do the job or where the public interest demands such an intervention. We believe that the role of government is to support and encourage private initiative and to provide the framework in which it can grow and create the thousands of jobs we need. Liberalism is not static because the world is not static. Liberalism is pragmatic and not doctrinaire.

[*Translation*]

Liberalism is not rigid for socialist nor single interest dominated. Liberalism rejects monopoly power, whether it is exercised by business, cults, unions or majorities.

A liberal understands that political freedom is impossible without economic freedom. Economic security is necessary for the full development of human personality and human fulfilment.

[*English*]

Liberals are never content with today. We accept change and we seek it. We believe in reform and we fashion it. We