

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

formal sense, by congratulating the mover and the seconder of the address. I have now, Mr. Speaker, listened to this historic function being performed, not as many times as the right hon. gentleman has but 14 or 15 times since I have been a member of parliament, and I do not recall any occasion when it was performed more impressively or with greater credit to those who undertook this difficult task.

I should like also to associate myself with the right hon. gentleman in his remarks about parliament, the part that parliament has played and must continue to play as we face difficulties in our country. We should not in the face of these difficulties forget, and I hope to have something to say about this in greater detail before I finish, that in this parliament all the people of every part of Canada are represented. We are the spokesmen for all the people of this country. We have been given an obligation to protect and advance within the constitution the interests of the people of Canada.

Perhaps he will not misunderstand me if I congratulate the right hon. gentleman on his speech this afternoon. We always listen to him with great interest, as his remarks are based on many years of parliamentary experience and indeed on several years of responsibility as the head of the government of Canada. He gave us this afternoon a demonstration, not that one was necessary, that he is still in politics. In my own contribution to this debate, Mr. Speaker, I hope to deal—I apologize in advance for the length of time I might find it necessary to take—with the speech from the throne and explain the proposals that have been made in that speech and what we have in mind in making those proposals.

I then hope to deal, as the right hon. gentleman did but perhaps my approach will be somewhat different, with the economic and financial situation of the country. This will be a sort of state of the nation analysis. I should like to deal with parliamentary procedures, as he did briefly, and what can be done to make our work more effective and perhaps to expedite it. Finally, I should like to say something about a matter which is very close to us all and deep in our hearts, national unity and the working of our federal system. There will be things mentioned in the speech from the throne about which I will not be talking.

The right hon. gentleman said some things about the commonwealth with which I agree. I hope before long to have an opportunity of discussing this matter at greater length. If a commonwealth prime ministers' conference is summoned, is agreed upon for this summer,

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we on this side will be happy to be represented at that conference. We are looking forward to a very large and important commonwealth meeting to be held in Canada this summer where all the 17 nations of the commonwealth—there may be more than 17 by that time—of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America will be represented. I refer to the commonwealth education conference. This conference would not have been held, and I am happy to admit it, if the initiative to that end had not been taken by the right hon. gentleman and his government of that day.

He asked me a great many questions about my trip to Paris and my trip to Washington, and I hope also to have an opportunity—although perhaps it will not arise in this statement—to deal with those questions. Certainly some of my colleagues on this side will deal in detail with a number of the points he raised regarding international affairs and defence, which I will not have an opportunity to deal with this afternoon. Meanwhile, until these questions are dealt with, I leave the right hon. gentleman to the happiness that he has obviously secured from his clippings and his quotations and his deductions and his interpretations. I confess at once that I have in my day, and no doubt will again in the future, received a good deal of comfort and satisfaction from clippings and quotations and interpretations and deductions myself.

Mr. Speaker, the legislative measures referred to in the speech from the throne, measures which have not made a very deep impression on my right hon. friend or no doubt on his friends, are not the whole of the government's program for this session but they are major, priority measures; and if some or them are holdovers from the last session I do not think we should be blamed for that. If parliament was unable to pass them in the last session, that is no reason why they should not be passed this session if they commend themselves to parliament. I believe these proposals in the speech from the throne indicate a businesslike and forward looking pattern of work which the government has put before this parliament. They embody a substantial share but not the whole of the program for a parliament, with which this government took office.

These measures, I would like to point out, are a balanced program. The speech from the throne contains measures to improve the efficiency of government. It contains important political reforms. It contains measures to promote economic advancement. It contains measures to improve the security of Canadians and to provide broader and more equal opportunities for all our citizens.

These are all major objectives of this government, as I know they are of parliament.