

The Address—Mr. Howard

this particular government. When I say "government side" I mean whatever government happens to be in office, whether here or in any of the provinces under the party system, and the result of that tendency is an unfortunate decline in the role of the individual member.

On practically all issues, crucial or otherwise, we find that party lines are drawn. We find it an accepted fact that a person considers he must vote with his party in any division or vote called in the house. It is the exception which proves this. Just the other day we had a vote with respect to a certain subject matter relating to papers, at which time one hon. member broke ranks and voted according to his individual feelings. I commend him for that action and I believe there should be more of it. Without it we promote the party system and enhance the control which cabinet and government already have over parliament, while at the same time we discuss less and less the opinions of individual members. Thus parliament becomes more dictatorial.

On traditional occasions such as this when hon. members make formal speeches we find that on the government side they start off by commending the government for all the sunshine and blaming the opposition for all the rain. On the opposition side we find the tendency is to do just the opposite. While this may occasionally produce some fun and laughter I do not believe it adds a very great deal to what we are attempting to do in parliament itself.

Mr. Pigeon: Do you refer to Mr. Argue?

Mr. Howard: I see my mouthy Union Nationale friend taking the floor, using his traditional approach of sitting and exercising his vocal cords. If my hon. friend would listen, and pay attention in the same way as I do to speakers from the other side, he would know that I have already said that I do not think this is the fault of any one party or any one government. It is an unfortunate growth which has developed over the years, but the solution to it can come about very easily and simply. It only requires a prime minister with a degree of courage and a desire to see parliament function to its fullest possible extent, a prime minister who, by a mere statement, will indicate to parliament that so far as the government is concerned it is not going to require its backbenchers to continue to operate as mere ciphers and vote on each issue that comes before parliament as though it were a complete party issue.

Mr. Graffey: This is the anarchy wing of the N.D.P.

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Mr. Howard: I should like to see that day arrive nor does it particularly matter whether it starts in any of the provinces. The provincial governments are equally guilty in following this practice. Mr. Speaker, I try my best to hear most of these usually inane comments from the other side, but oft times I miss them. I wish hon. members, if they want to interject, would do so in a proper fashion. I know many of them enjoy doing it, not for the purpose of contributing anything sensible to the debate but just to speak closely to the ear of the *Hansard* reporter, in order that what these hon. members consider to be their bright comments appear on the record.

I should like to deal with the all-important question of the need for a health plan in Canada providing coverage on a prepaid basis to the people of this nation to ensure that their illnesses will be treated expeditiously, and to ensure that they will not have to fret and worry about the wherewithal to pay doctors' and other bills when illness does strike. I am sure we all remember the glowing terms in which the Prime Minister some years ago referred to what he would do if he got into office, even with respect to the half way measure which we have in the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act. One of the bad cheques which the Prime Minister wrote related to the inclusion of tubercular sanatoria under that act. Another referred to the inclusion of mental hospitals, and another related to including in the formula for payment from the federal treasury to the provinces an amount taking into account the depreciation of the hospitals' capital facilities. Each and every one of these things was promised. They promised to extend the coverage to tubercular sanatoria and to mental hospitals, and to take into account the question of depreciation.

Each one of these three promises has been forgotten, discarded and broken by the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) and the government in office. It is bad enough that political promises are so lightly looked upon, but when they relate to the welfare, well-being and health of the citizens of this country it makes it that much worse. In this respect the record of Canada is one of which we should not be too proud.

The record is one of the Liberal party wandering in the darkness for 40 years following its 1919 promise. It is a record of their promoting in parliament the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act under which we would financially assist the provinces in the institution of provincially acceptable hospital insurance coverage programs. It is also a record of this government amending that