

The Address—Mr. Ellis

whatsoever of any fundamental difference in policy between the government of the day and its predecessor Liberal government. There is not one indication in the legislative program of the present government to suggest that there was any real change of government on June 10. It is true that amendments to existing legislation have been brought forward but they have merely been amendments with regard to amounts rather than amendments involving differences in principle.

During the summer months I had the good fortune to be able to visit a great number of my constituents and to talk over with them the prospects of the new parliament. I found there was a great deal of uniformity of opinion on certain basic questions. I found that the people of Regina generally, irrespective of the way they voted in the last election, expected that as the result of the minority position in which the present government finds itself we were going to get more results this fall than would have been obtained if any party had received an over-all majority. Moreover, they were equally anxious that the present government come forward with its legislative program in order that it might be judged on the basis of what it does and not on the basis of speeches made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) and the members of his cabinet.

An hon. Member: What would you have done?

Mr. Ellis: They realize, of course, that the defeat of the government on the floor of the house on a want of confidence motion would bring on an early election, but apart from that possibility or eventuality there was general agreement that the new government was honour bound to fulfil its commitments, to continue to present its program and take its chances on the floor of the House of Commons.

Following the last election the present Prime Minister as leader of the victorious party had a decision to make, whether to form a government or whether to decline the invitation. There was no compulsion involved at all. He decided to form a government and we must presume that he did so out of a desire to present the Conservative program to parliament. I would suggest that there is a moral obligation on the part of the government to continue to bring down the type of legislation which they promised the Canadian people prior to June 10 and to continue to bring down that legislation as long as they enjoy the confidence of the majority of the members of the House of Commons. It seems to me that should be obvious to all members.

Of course, I suppose the Prime Minister may feel he has an obligation to serve the

[Mr. Ellis.]

political needs of the Progressive Conservative party. That is a question that he himself has to decide, whether to give top priority to their solemn obligations to the people of Canada and proceed as far as they can with their legislative program or whether to place the particular political needs of a political party uppermost in the minds of the government.

Mr. Fraser: The people come first.

Mr. Ellis: I suggest that there have been indications of late that the supporters of the government are more preoccupied with playing politics than they are with pursuing the program of action promised the people of Canada prior to the last election. We have seen indications of that in speeches made in the house. We have seen other indications in speeches made outside the house. I noticed in the Windsor *Star* the other day a report of the Tory nominating convention in one of the Essex seats. I quote right from that newspaper the words of a Conservative member of this house:

The Prime Minister is champing at the bit, waiting for an opportunity to dissolve parliament.

I would think that the hon. member who made that statement is being a little unfair about the Prime Minister because what he is suggesting, in effect, is that the Prime Minister is more concerned with finding an excuse to call an election than he is in completing the job which he was put into office to do. I would suggest that the people of Canada would prefer to judge this government on the basis of the fulfilment of all its pledges. They would take a very contrary view if they were to believe that the only reason an election was precipitated was because the leader of the government felt it was to the political advantage of the Conservative party so to do. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the people of my constituency are much less concerned about the political fortunes of the Conservative party than they are with the legislative program which they have reason to believe should be brought down at this time.

We ask questions on orders of the day to try to get some indication from the government whether or not they are going to introduce amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act or the National Housing Act, and what do they say? They say, due to the shortness of the session we are not going to be able to do that. What is all this talk about the shortness of the session? We are sent down here to do a job, and so far as I am concerned we should stay in Ottawa until that job is completed. As long as the government continues to enjoy the voting