

Redistribution Commission

I would like to close what I have to say now by repeating once more the words of the right hon. gentleman a year ago, on April 9, 1962 when he said:

We want to follow the lead which has been taken by almost every nation—certainly by the commonwealth nations as well as by the mother of parliaments—that membership in parliament shall be determined fairly by the people.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Orpheus had the reputation of being able to bring the birds out of the trees by the suave manner in which he spread his charm.

Mr. Knowles: Orpheus was a piker.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am still on a high mythological level and the word "piker" was not then good usage. But had it been, it would have been most appropriate. I have been in this house a long while, but I have never heard the hon. gentleman, to use his own expression, and to repeat it once more, spreading the charm as he has done today. I know he will not misinterpret what I have in mind if I say that in direct proportion he arouses in me fears as to what may be contained in this legislation. I know I shall not be misunderstood, and I am in no way contravening the rules by ascribing motives—because I am not doing that—when I say that to the extent he has carried himself into the elevated airs of high non-partisanship the committee will look with even greater care at the provisions of the bills which he is to bring before us. Can I say that without imputing motives?

I am very much in agreement with what the hon. gentleman had to say regarding the image of parliament. I think what he said represents the wide knowledge he has, not only of the history of our country and its constitutional development, but also the practical knowledge which came to him when he was in the position of adviser to one or more prime ministers. Apparently in those days the views he holds today were not expressed as strongly as they might have been. Certainly the redistribution measures which were introduced while he was in the august position of being more or less a director of prime ministers did not bring about the idealistic bills which, he has now stated, will be laid before parliament.

I am in agreement with him, too, on the question of each of us standing for parliament and the principles for which parliament stands. When I read what has been written by those who elevate themselves to a position of punditry, that parliament is today an institution unworthy of its traditions, the Secretary of State and I are at one in our attitude in that regard. I have seen the parliament of the United Kingdom in action.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

I recall on one occasion in 1957 going over to London after the conference of NATO powers in Paris in December. Prime Minister Macmillan was reporting on the conference that afternoon. I was in the gallery and making due allowance for the difficulties I may have had in hearing, I do not think the members of the house heard much more than I did by reason of the interruptions and the din in that chamber. I recall very well one occasion in this house back in nineteen—I shall not fix the year because that would identify the Speaker—when it became somewhat noisy and the Speaker said, "Let me make this clear: as long as I am Speaker of this house there is going to be a minimum of decorum."

All of us realize, as the hon. gentleman has said, that in the crucible of discussion there will be fire, and things will be said which in the retrospective hours might very well not have been said. I, naturally, feel gratified that the hon. gentleman should have seen fit to quote at some length the remarks I made. I was glad to see that before he identified me as the speaker there was applause on the Liberal side of the house. That paragraph aroused their support.

Mr. Pickersgill: I wonder if the right hon. gentleman will permit me to say that before I identified the speaker there was also applause on his side of the house?

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is no doubt about that, because they have always been appreciative of the good things of life and the best of parliament. But today there was that unanimity which does not always exist, when the hon. gentleman quoted from the observations I have made.

Speaking more seriously, I think our purpose and our aim must be to do our part to elevate representative government, to bring about the assurance that election shall be determined by the people, not by the manipulation of the ballot box or of constituencies. I think, also, that we shall have to give serious consideration to a problem which is becoming more and more difficult; with the mounting costs of election campaigns the state will have to step in and determine limitations upon the expenditures to be made by each and every one of us in our constituencies. All these things take time, but I feel there is unanimity in this regard. When I look back to the early days when I was a candidate—and an unsuccessful candidate—many thoughts occur to me. Indeed, I was just reading in the life of Mackenzie King, volume two, that when I was defeated in 1929 in Prince Albert, the then attorney general of Saskatchewan wrote to the right hon. member for Prince Albert, the then prime minister,