

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso (Mr. MacEachen), that the address be amended by adding the following words:

—and this House condemns the attempt of the government to undermine Petro-Canada and supports the maintenance and expansion of our national petroleum corporation, as the property of all Canadians, as the largest Canadian-owned corporation in the petroleum industry and as a major instrument of Canadian energy policy.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to stand and take part in this debate for the first time as Prime Minister of this country. I must say I am pleased to find that the former prime minister is adapting so well to a role which obviously very much fits a man of his talents and temperament.

On behalf of the government I want formally to express our appreciation to the Governor General and Mrs. Schreyer for the work they have done for Canada during their period of office. It has been a service that has been very energetic, one that has sought to bring the values and customs of that office to all corners of the country.

I also want to congratulate most sincerely the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. That is always a difficult occasion for new members rising for the first time to make their maiden speech on the first sitting day of the House of Commons. I join in the words of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Trudeau) in expressing our congratulations to those two members who made very direct, businesslike speeches, speeches in the tradition of the regions from which they come and in the tradition that animates and moves most members, whether they have come newly or again to this House of Commons.

I want also, Mr. Speaker, after the great struggle in which we had to drag you from your seat yesterday, to congratulate you on your re-election by the House of Commons to preside over our proceedings. I am sure it will be a presidency and direction that will be as distinguished in the future as it has been in the past. We wish you well and wish all of us well as you preside over this central institution of the democracy of the land.

I must say to the former prime minister, the Leader of the Opposition, how much I appreciated his counsel and advice in the early days of my prime ministry, his willingness to meet with me, particularly in preparation for trips abroad, and his absolute co-operation in the work of transition from one government to another. It was very much appreciated. It was another signal contribution on his part to this country. I want to take this opportunity here to thank him formally and directly for that help at that time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: As I said earlier, he seems to be taking very well to his new role. It is an area in which I have certain experience. He will recognize as time goes on that there is a time to stop fighting the last election and to begin thinking about the future.

The Address—Mr. Clark

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1610)

Mr. Clark: If he does not do that, there is the hon. member from Winnipeg and there are others who will ensure that the party does that for him.

In his remarks the Leader of the Opposition raised the rhetorical question as to which of the premiers of Canada told me to go shake myself. Well, we all know that they all told him to go shake himself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: He raised the concern—and it is not unnatural that he would—that we have changed the system of cabinet government in the country. We have changed it principally in two ways. First, we have made public what had previously been kept secret about the way cabinets govern in this country. There has always been an inner cabinet in Canada. The difference is that with this regime, which believes in open government, the composition of that inner cabinet is public, whereas under the regime of the former prime minister the composition of his inner cabinet had been private.

Again the Leader of the Opposition raised a question about the strength of the influence of the voices from New Brunswick, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Alberta. What has happened is that distinct from the kind of government we had prior to May 22 this is a government in which voices from all of the regions of Canada count and in which influence is not reserved to a select elite accumulated around the Prime Minister, in the office of the Privy Council and in the Prime Minister's office. I should say to the Prime Minister—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: I should say to the former prime minister. I wanted to raise his hopes because there is no question that none of the hon. members opposite are going to do so.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that I am a Prime Minister from Alberta, and I am no less a Canadian for that. If he had recognized some time ago the fact about Albertans and, indeed, about citizens of other provinces, that we can be loyal to our provinces and loyal to our nation, he would not have encountered the difficulties he and his government did.

I want to extend my personal congratulations to all members of the House of Commons elected here. I have had the opportunity to extend those congratulations personally to several of them, but I want particularly to extend a welcome to those members of Parliament who are elected for the first time because, as they will find, they are members of a very special institution which is clearly unique in this land. This is the central institution of Canada. It is the one place where every corner of a vast country has the right to be represented and the power to be heard. The traditions of the institution change, but