

The Address—Mr. Pearson

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): If I remember correctly, tenders were called last week. However, I will check on the matter and make sure.

Mr. Nixon: May I ask a supplementary question. Will the minister check as to when the contract may be let?

Mr. Balcer: Yes.

GRAIN

INQUIRY AS TO QUOTA POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to address a question to the genial but remote Minister of Agriculture. What progress is being made in raising grain delivery quotas in western Canada, that are today much lower in general than they were a year ago?

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Agriculture): I believe I will take this question as notice, Mr. Speaker. I think I will follow the practice this year of issuing a weekly statement to western members who may be interested in this matter rather than taking up time on the orders of the day.

Mr. Argue: May I ask the minister whether this innovation is to avoid embarrassment on the floor of the house?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Friday, November 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Donald MacInnis for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate I would begin, as is customary, by congratulating the mover (Mr. MacInnis) and the seconder (Mr. Paul) of the address in reply because of the honour that was conferred on them and their constituencies by the invitation given them to take on this responsibility, and also because of the way in which they discharged it. With the straw that was available I think they were quite successful in making a respectable number of bricks.

May I also offer my congratulations to the four new members who have been introduced into this house. I know the house will understand if I perhaps underline my satisfaction at the appearance of three on this side of the house, and of those three, particularly two who are on this part of this side of the house, the hon. members for Niagara Falls and Labelle.

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I should also like to congratulate the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Flemming) on his arrival in the House of Commons, something which I did my unsuccessful best to prevent. However, I wish him well during his tenure of office in this new and important portfolio. I suppose the minister's arrival is part of that process, about which we heard so much during the recess, of strengthening the cabinet which is, I know, an objective as important to the government as its necessity was obvious to everybody else. It is true, of course, that these by-elections, or two of them, were caused by the translation of members of the government into other spheres which are more exalted and perhaps even more comfortable.

This gives me an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to pay my respects to those two members, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Pearkes. They are gentlemen who served their country over a long span of years, in war and in peace, with devotion and distinction; and in war, certainly with gallantry which, in respect of Mr. Pearkes, has become almost legendary in our military history. I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that in war these two gentlemen inspired fear in the opposition. In the House of Commons they inspired respect and regard in the opposition and, indeed, an affection which we were happy to share with their supporters on the other side of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: I hope, Mr. Speaker, the ministers who have been given new portfolios, and those who have been promoted into the cabinet, will have happiness, health and satisfaction in their new work. Perhaps I can associate with that hope for satisfaction in their work those who have been advanced from the ranks or who have been retained in their previous positions as parliamentary secretaries.

Mr. Speaker, this is a discussion of the speech from the throne, a speech from the throne for which, in our constitutional system, the government is responsible, because it gives government policy, government plans and government proposals for the parliamentary session. Therefore the government, of course, takes responsibility for the words that have been uttered in that speech by His Excellency. At least, Mr. Speaker, that is what the speech from the throne is supposed to do; it is supposed to give government plans, government policies and government legislative proposals, though we recall that last year important proposals were made by the Prime Minister in his own speech from the throne after the first one had been presented on opening day.