

The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker

The great lakes could become the reservoir to provide for the future of the economy, in fact the survival of the economy. We must not let narrow-minded international relations interfere with co-operation in bringing this concept into practice. Let us investigate; let us appoint a highly qualified royal commission, the personnel of which is not burdened with a host of other tasks, and give it the power to do an efficient job. Then, if its report is favourable, let us take the next bold step of implementation and see the concept become a reality, so that future generations will say in all sincerity that the members of this twenty seventh parliament did indeed have their interests and the interests of Canada at heart.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, first I want to offer a word of congratulation on his maiden speech to the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat. It is always a most trying and difficult task to make one's first speech in this house following one's election to parliament. I know how personally diffident I felt about it. I think I was one of the last to speak of those who came into the house with me at the same time. It is so important for new members to catch something of the atmosphere of the house, to acquire some knowledge of its traditions, its background, its aspirations and its purposes, and it has been quite revealing to see the high grade of members who have been elected for the first time to this parliament.

Their speeches have been uniformly good and well thought out, which augurs well for this institution and for Canada. I am happy to be privileged to follow the hon. gentleman and to say to him that his contribution, and the suggestions he has made, are worthy of the fullest consideration. They indicate he has given study to a question that is of tremendous importance not only to this area but to the province of Ontario and the country as a whole.

The idea of the development of the Ottawa waterway has been before successive parliaments over a period of 70 years. It received intermittent support, but it is still much in the position that it was in when first discussed, I think in 1854, at the time of the old parliament of Upper and Lower Canada.

This evening I want to refer for just a moment to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Waterloo South (Mr. Saltsman). He is a member for whom I have a profound respect, but I felt somewhat sorry for him a

few minutes ago as he read that testimonial of the way parliament should act. However, the fact that he smiled about what he was reading indicated he was not taking it very seriously.

His argument in effect was that economic matters should not be dealt with in an amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I was surprised to hear that viewpoint expressed, and while he was speaking I sent out to secure a copy of the amendments that were moved by the C.C.F., whose paternity for the present N.D.P. some seem to have forgotten. Though the name has changed many of the personages in that party still remain. Their argument now is that one must not deal with economic matters in an amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne; but that is what the C.C.F. did on October 16, 1957. Their amendment was moved by Mr. Coldwell, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and among other things it said:

We respectfully submit, however, that in the opinion of this House Your Majesty's advisers should give immediate consideration to the advisability of taking steps to deal with the menace of inflation, rapidly rising unemployment and other serious problems facing this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: They applaud that which they now call heresy, but which was at that time orthodox with them.

Mr. Lewis: What is the relevancy? Even a student lawyer can do better than that.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On May 29, 1958, the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge), seconded by Mr. Argue moved the following amendment:

We respectfully represent to Your Excellency that, in the opinion of this house, consideration should be given to the advisability of presenting legislation at this session to relieve the very heavy financial burden now carried by the municipalities of this country.

The same argument advanced today could have been advanced at that time.

Then on January 19, 1959, Mr. Argue, seconded by the hon. member for Kootenay West, moved an amendment which contained the following words:

—and their failure to provide agriculture with a fair share of the national income, and their further failure to take effective steps to combat inflation.