

*The Address—Mr. Coates*

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland): Mr. Speaker, my first words during this twenty seventh Parliament must be in congratulation to you upon your election to your high office. I witnessed your performance during the twenty sixth parliament and you gave at that time every indication in my opinion that you will be able to handle this house of minorities with a fair and firm hand, while at the same time being as impartial and unbiased as humanly possible. I look forward to watching you in the days ahead, because I believe you will give us the degree of stability we will need under certain circumstances, in certain situations. I was indeed pleased to learn of your selection and election.

I should also like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the committee of the whole house, and his Deputy. I have watched them both and I know that they will do a very competent job in the days ahead.

Let me at this time also offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder, both of whom have acquitted themselves in an outstanding manner. I am sure their constituents will be very proud of them. They both indicate an appreciation for what is happening in Canada today and let us hope that they will rise often in this house to give us their views—because certainly this is why we are here, whether we are in the opposition or in the government.

While there are some who enjoy criticizing members of parliament for doing those things they were elected to do, let me say that I am one of those who believe that this is a debating forum in which ideas are conceived. Those in government receive advice from all members. Sometimes they do not accept that advice, but it should always be made available to them. If members take a more active part in debate, I think our country will be a better place in which to live.

My first remarks on the throne speech and on the action of the government must be in the form of commendation. As a Nova Scotia member I am very pleased to note that one of the first acts of this government had regard to the field of education and university grants. This was an election promise made by the two major parties of this nation. I take nothing away from the government because it happened to be the successor which went forward and immediately enacted one plank of its program. I am especially pleased to see that the special plight of maritime universities was recognized, and am hopeful—

[Mr. Brewin.]

• (9:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I bring to the attention of hon. members the fact that it is very difficult for the Chair to follow hon. members who have the floor when conversations are going on at the back of the house.

Mr. Coates: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is very close to ten o'clock and I can understand some hon. members conversing before they leave. As I was saying, I am very pleased to see that the government recognized the special circumstances of the maritime universities and the fact that we have a great many students coming to our universities from other parts of Canada, and indeed other parts of the world. This has placed a special burden on our universities, and that burden will be greatly eased by the fact that this recognition has been given. I am especially pleased to see that they took this action, because it was not one of the recommendations of the Bladen report. We were rather upset about that fact, and are very pleased that the government did take the step that we wanted to see taken.

I should also like to say that I am pleased about the type of legislation being proposed in the throne speech in the field of agriculture. I could get into a great argument here and say that the party to which I belong promised this legislation and had it ready for action in 1963. However, I have said it before and I do not believe there is much value in my saying it again. But I do say to the government that I hope they will go forward with their agricultural legislation, especially for farmers in eastern Canada, at an early date. In this connection, Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to see both the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauv ) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) in the house. I would assure them that they will have my full co-operation with regard to this legislation as soon as it is brought forward. I am hopeful that it will be brought forward at an early stage in this parliament because I am certain that both ministers recognize the fact that in eastern Canada we do have problems in agriculture, and these problems must be corrected if our farmers are to remain on the farm and are to have the kind of income that they must have if they are going to be able to look after themselves, their families and have a future.

One of the statements made in the throne speech that particularly impressed me was