

their challenges of mass communication and instant response.

I, therefore, have no hesitation in asserting that one of the primary tasks of this parliament should be the continuation of the process of reform of our procedure and structures which will enable us to discharge our responsibilities effectively. From the model parliament of Edward I to the sweeping revisions of our own procedures beginning in 1963, the history of reform is an attempt to strike a balance between the manifest need to sharpen parliament's capacity to respond quickly to public demand and the preservation of the fundamental principles of redress of grievances and control of expenditures. These are no mean objectives; they are the pillars upon which this institution depends. They were of urgent importance in Simon de Montfort's time when the barons asserted their right to represent the people against the exigencies of the royal exchequer; and they continue to be fundamental objectives today.

At this point, having outlined something of the nature of the problem, I wish to congratulate my predecessor as leader of the government in this House, who is also my successor in the post of Secretary of State for External Affairs—a post to which I am sure he will lend lustre and distinction—for the manner in which he discharged the onerous functions of his office while keeping to the fore the great and fundamental principles on which the institution is erected. My distinguished predecessor in office will agree, I am sure, that the inevitable growth of executive power, inevitable because of rising public expectations and increasing complexities of the problems facing the government, calls for a consequent strengthening and shoring-up of the legislative branch by rendering its deliberations more effective and more responsive.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** And without destroying the rights of the opposition.

**Mr. Sharp:** Exactly. Cynicism about representative institutions is characteristic of our time. If parliament is to respond to criticism, it must be ready to adapt to change, to preserve the advantages of a system in which the executive branch can perform its essential functioning of governing while subjected to wholesome checks and constraints on the untrammelled growth of its power. Going a step further, it is not enough for parliament to be accessible, for governments to be responsible, for ministers to be accountable; not only must these things happen, they must be seen to happen, in order for Canadians to retain confidence in and continue to identify the management of their own destiny with our noblest institution.

By making parliament a more flexible vehicle of public participation, by emphasizing its function of informing and enlightening Canadians about the business of government, we shall be moving toward closer identification of Canadians with this institution and system which has served us well. This is essential, for parliament cannot accomplish its historic functions in isolation or by being shunted aside in a welter of conflicting demands for public attention. If parliament ceases to hold a position of priority in public affairs as the centre-piece of the democratic system, then parliament's capacity as a protector of our freedoms will be diminished.

*The Address—Mr. Sharp*

● (1420)

In some emerging nations, populations grapple with the subtleties of "one man, one vote", while in other countries with a long tradition of democratic institutions, freedom is stifled. In vast areas of the supposedly civilized world, individual freedom has retrogressed to a level comparable to that of the Middle Ages. In many areas of the world a new age of darkness has encompassed man's aspirations. But everywhere the aspiration for freedom remains a flame in human hearts.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and through you the members of this House: is there any parliamentary democracy that we know of that has had to erect a wall protected by barbed-wire or patrolled by armed guards to keep people in? There have been occasions, and there will be occasions in the future, of high drama, of inspiration and eloquence on the floor of the House. But it is in the day to day assertion of our freedoms, the rights and privileges of members, including the right to question, criticize and disagree, that parliament renders its most valuable service.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I apologize for interrupting, Mr. Speaker. I have been called out of the House on short notice. I shall be back as soon as I can. I would not want to be unfair to the minister in the very interesting address he is giving. Excuse me.

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is always very courteous. I thank him. One of our greatest parliamentarians, Edward Blake, said 100 years ago:

The privileges of parliament are the privileges of the people and the rights of parliament are the rights of the people.

The current reform wave—if I might so describe the process which began in 1963—was given new impetus in 1968 under the distinguished and purposeful leadership of the present Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) who, as leader of the House, ushered in sweeping reforms. My immediate predecessor, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), carried on the process in a minority parliament. Revision of parliamentary salaries—which will have to be considered again—increased and improved facilities for members, including research, control of election expenses—now in effect—an innovative and constructive approach to redistribution of parliamentary seats, and a landmark green paper on conflicts members face when outside interests may affect their independence in the discharge of parliamentary duties, are among the achievements of his tenure of office.

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), who will once again officiate as House leader of the official opposition, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), that acknowledged expert on the rules, and many others made their distinctive contributions to these far-reaching reforms.

It fell to Mr. Speaker Lamoureux to preside over the introduction of the new rules with that wisdom and impartial judgment which made him an ornament to the chair. I am sure that you, sir, his successor in that high and crucial office, will exhibit the same qualities along with a flair for innovation already shown in your conduct