

party considerations will be forgotten in an all out war effort—it is not yet too late—so that we as members of this parliament, to whom has come the greatest challenge that ever came to a Canadian parliament, will do our duty, not with our eye on the ballot box, but with a sincere desire to serve regardless of whether or not we are returned to parliament at the next election; so that we can look back to this hour and say that out of the trials and tribulations through which Canada passed in the second great war was created a saga of grandeur of a united Canada ready for that new world that Churchill and Roosevelt have pictured. To my French-Canadian friends I say sincerely—

Mr. DUPUIS: Talk about Saskatchewan a little.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I do not know why my hon. friend objects to that. Does he object to an attitude of tolerance, an attitude of fairness?

Mr. DUPUIS: Leave Quebec alone.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The attitude being shown to-day by the hon. member who interrupts is regrettable.

Mr. DUPUIS: "Physician, cure thyself."

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Is it a refusal to cooperate? As a member from another part of Canada I would say to hon. members from the province of Quebec, let us forget these differences and unite.

Mr. DUPUIS: You do your share; we will do ours.

Mr. J. M. DECHENE (Athabaska): It is with some hesitation that I rise at this stage of this momentous debate, following some of the giants of the tribune and the platform and the bar. But I am consoled by the fact that for many weeks, almost I might say for two years, like many other hon. members, I have been a listener rather than a talker. That is particularly so since there has been so much small talk, loose talk, political talk, and even evil talk. So I think I am justified in taking part in the debate at this stage.

In asking for the privilege of the floor, Mr. Speaker, I was actuated by the fact that I represent a constituency in which may be found perhaps a truer cross-section of the people of Canada than exists anywhere else in this country. Canadians now living in the great constituency of Athabaska have come from all over the world—from every province in this dominion, from almost every state of the union, from practically every country in Europe; and it includes thousands of

French Canadians, from which race I am proud to trace my descent. In speaking this afternoon I only wish I had the proper words with which to clothe my thoughts, with which to express them as clearly as I feel them. I have never read a speech in my life, and I am not going to start to-day, but I would ask to be allowed to read just one paragraph from something I sent to a newspaper in my constituency a few days ago, in reply to an article which was published therein, which article caused a good deal of comment and called forth many letters supporting one side or the other. In my communication I set out the reason why the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), brought this amendment before the house at this time. I said:

A few months ago the people of Canada were given a privilege shared by only a chosen few in these chaotic times, the privilege of expressing their opinion and views on a matter of grave concern to their country. Unlike those countries labouring under the heavy yoke of ruthless invasion, where the voice of the people has been silenced, and where a dark wilderness of oppression, of despair and famine has descended, Canada has kept intact the birth-right of her citizens. The debate which has just started in this house is a direct consequence of that expression of will by the people. To ignore it would be a denial of democracy itself. I propose to keep that fact ever present in my mind in adding my voice to the discussion on the proposed amendment to the mobilization act—

—which I thought then would be introduced, as it has been. I have not consulted with any party, with any whip, with any minister, or with any leader as to the things I have to say. The thoughts which I wish to express are entirely my own. I will admit, however, that though I was confined to the hospital I did write to every member of the executive in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. This executive numbers some forty-seven and represents every element in that area—English-speaking Canadians, French Canadians, central Europeans, Americans, and so on. It is a true representation of the population of the constituency. Strange as it may appear, though the riding voted almost fifty-fifty on the plebiscite, while the members of the Liberal association and the executive almost all voted "yes", with one or two exceptions the replies I received from the executive empowered me to say what I thought. I was told that I had kept the confidence they had reposed in me at the time of the election, and that they trusted me to represent truly the views of the riding of Athabaska on this matter.

I have said, and I repeat, that I take my hat off to no one, if you will pardon the expression, in pride of ancestry or in loyalty to race and religion. When I speak to you