

Royal Assent

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what our status is at the moment, it being after six o'clock. However, I believe it would be the wish of all hon. members, whether we are proceeding in a formal sense or an informal sense, that I extend to you at what is no doubt the closing session of this twenty fourth parliament, the thanks of all hon. members for the admirable, fair, good humoured and always pleasant way in which you have presided over our deliberations. If a friendly atmosphere has not always prevailed in the chamber, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly no fault of yours because you have radiated friendliness, fairness and a desire to address yourself to the business before the house. There may not be agreement on all outstanding questions, Mr. Speaker, but on this one I am sure there will be a unanimous feeling in this house in thanking you for the manner in which you have presided over the twenty fourth parliament, as you did over the twenty third parliament.

Perhaps you will not think it amiss, Mr. Speaker, if I associate others with this expression of gratitude to you. I think, of course, of the Clerk of the House and the first assistant and second assistant clerks. They have always been fair, always courteous and always devoted to their duties. I think that all members of this house consider themselves happy indeed that the house has been so admirably served by its officers.

I was not aware that the Prime Minister would be arriving at this particular time, Mr. Speaker, otherwise I might have suggested a few minutes of relaxation pending his arrival. He has indicated to me, however, that I may complete my remarks. In this case, I should like to include as well members of the staff of the house, the Sergeant-at-Arms and his deputy, the staff of this house in all its branches, who served this house so faithfully.

You have been associated and upheld, Mr. Speaker, by two worthy members of this house, the Deputy Speaker and the deputy chairman of committees. They, like you, have presided over the deliberations of the house and committees with fairness, with dignity and have sought as well to make their contributions to the transaction of the business of the house in as pleasant an atmosphere as may be possible in a parliament that is known to have divisions. So, Mr. Speaker, this is an expression that is extended to all who have served this house, and I believe it will be the expression of all hon. members.

Mr. Pickersgill: In the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, which he regrets very much, and in the absence of my hon. friend from Laurier who would normally

[Mr. Speaker.]

have followed the Minister of Finance, I may say that I do not think my sentiments could be expressed any better than in the words used by the Minister of Finance. It has not always been the case in the 24th, or even the 23rd parliament, that I have found myself in agreement with the utterances of the Minister of Finance but, at the very close of this parliament, I find myself perforce in agreement with him because we do appreciate the way in which Your Honour—on some occasions that have been quite trying and difficult, when feelings were aroused and when difficult points were raised—has threaded through the intricacies of procedure and come out with decisions which some of us may not always have agreed with but which all of us agreed were always reached objectively and fairly and in the best traditions of the high office you hold.

As for the staff of the house, the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant-at-Arms and all those who assist them in the procedure of the house and in the housekeeping of parliament which has become more difficult as we spread ourselves into more and more real estate, above ground and under ground, I express the warmest feelings of appreciation. I may add we hope that all the digging of tunnels may be completed by the time the next parliament meets.

In all the matters which make for the efficient discharge by this house of the duties we are sent to discharge as the representatives of the people, we have had the un-failing and courteous assistance of the staff who have often worked very long hours under quite trying circumstances. It is not often that we have the opportunity to express the gratitude we feel and I support the Minister of Finance in all he has said about them. Of course that applies particularly to *Hansard*. Perhaps there are few hon. members in the house who have more reason to thank *Hansard* because there are few members who have put a greater burden upon them, according to some of the statistics which I might be inclined to dispute, but which I sometimes read in the press.

As for the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of Committees I echo what has been said by the Minister of Finance. Both of these gentlemen have replaced others who fulfilled those functions previously, and in the particular case of the hon. member for Spadina because of circumstances which we all deeply regret.

Perhaps sometimes our differences with the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of Committees may have been a little more intense than they ever were with Your Honour. Nevertheless on this occasion I would like to echo the words of the Minister of