

It is therefore quite clear that the hon. member did base his case, as I said, on his contention that the 1948 statute repealed the 1931 act.

Mr. Speaker: I did not deal with the merits, so to speak, of the point of law which was raised because, for the reasons I have indicated, it seemed to me it could not be raised here as a matter of privilege.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER FOR YORK EAST TO PRIVY COUNCIL

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce to the house that the hon. member for York East (Mr. McGregor) was this day sworn of Her Majesty's privy council. In view of the fact that his biographical sketch in the Parliamentary Guide is one of the shortest and least informative, I think I should point out something of the service which the hon. member has given to his country in a period of some 50 years.

His service goes back to his election as a member of the Plains Road school board. He was elected deputy reeve of York township in 1922, deputy reeve of York East in 1924-25 and reeve of York East in 1926. He was elected to the House of Commons for the first time in 1926, and he has been here continuously for 34 years. He thereby becomes the dean of the house. In the United Kingdom a person occupying that position is called the father of the house, which means that, in either case, he has served for a longer continuous period than any other member.

I simply want to add that by giving him membership in the privy council, tribute is paid to the service he has rendered to parliament and to his country for so many years, and that such abiding modesty and friendliness have earned for him the warm-hearted friendship of all members of the house.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is a very great honour, of course, to be sworn of Her Majesty's privy council for Canada, and perhaps the honour is all the greater when there are no executive duties attached to the swearing in. The hon. member who has served this house so well over so many years may find it difficult to believe when I tell him that we on this side are just as happy about this honour as his own colleagues on the government side. It just shows, Mr. Speaker, where peace and quiet, shown persistently, courteously and continually, will get one.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, this is one of those happy occasions when the house can take a unanimous position.

Royal Commission on Health Standards

The announcement made by the Prime Minister is most welcome; it recognizes the services of the dean of the house in a very practical and fitting manner.

The hon. member has been known to many of us for quite a number of years. I think what has happened today is an indication that there are a number of roads that one might take to the privy council, and the road taken by the hon. member over the years has been one of brevity and clarity. Perhaps this is an example that some of the rest of us might consider.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

APPOINTMENT OF ROYAL COMMISSION RESPECTING HEALTH STANDARDS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have an announcement to make now which I am sure will be of interest to all hon. members and the country as a whole. For some time past representations have been made to the government by various organizations and groups emphasizing the need of a comprehensive study of Canada's national health requirements, and the existing deficiencies in health care, with a view to consideration of the establishment of a national health plan.

It will be of interest to the house to learn that recently the Canadian Medical Association communicated with me in this regard and, with the leave of the house, I shall read the letter which embodies the views expressed therein. It is directed to myself from the Canadian Medical Association.

December 12, 1960.

The Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Diefenbaker:

The concern of the medical profession of this country in making personal health services available to our fellow citizens has been demonstrated by the establishment, under medical auspices, of 11 voluntary plans of prepaid medical care which now provide benefits for over 4 million persons. The Canadian Medical Association is conscious of a quickening of public interest in the whole area of health services, including the application of insurance methods of defraying the costs of medical services for all.

The issues involved are difficult and complicated and we regard it as a matter of considerable importance that a study be undertaken by a body which will command the respect of all Canadians in order that future plans and decisions be arrived at wisely and objectively.

I am therefore directed to request that there be established a royal commission or other agency under the authority of part I of the Inquiries Act for the purpose of assessing the health needs and resources of Canada with a view to recommending methods of ensuring the highest standard of health care for all Canadians.

The recent distribution of the attached statement on medical services insurance to members of the