

I cannot proceed without extending my sincere thanks to my old friend, the senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert), for the more than kindly remarks that he made this afternoon concerning myself and my father. Having said that, I would like to thank all honourable senators on both sides of this chamber who have been most kind in welcoming me into this chamber.

I was sorry that I was unable to be here during the entire address of the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald, Brantford). If he were here I would personally apologize to him. I have read his address with interest. I also want to thank him for the references that he made therein to me. I would not want to feel, however, that the Leader of the Opposition, or any honourable senator opposite, was going to suffer from any confusion or worry by having to decide as to whom he should address questions of the Government in this house. Such questions will, of course, be addressed to the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Brooks).

In his opening remarks the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald, Brantford), and I assume he spoke for all honourable senators in opposition, quoted Senator Dandurand:

We stand above the sharp divisions of party that exist in the other chamber.

He might also have quoted from another address that Senator Dandurand made in this chamber. On March 8, 1934, in answer to a question from a colleague in the cabinet as to why the Senate was not busy, and upon the colleague having said, "Why, we have already sent you half a dozen bills," Senator Dandurand replied:

Yes, but whereas in discussing those bills in the House of Commons you for the most part address yourselves to the electors, we address ourselves to the question, and it is a much shorter procedure.

Now I must confess that in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and I think in the speech of the honourable senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert), there was some tendency, contrary to Senator Dandurand's admonition, to direct remarks to the electorate rather than to the question.

This afternoon I propose to deal with some of the matters that have been raised, and which I can only assume represent the considered views of the Opposition in this house. I do not intend to deal with the matters raised in the Speech from the Throne, except incidentally. The Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Brooks), when he had finished speaking last evening, left almost no ground

uncovered. I would interject, however, that the Speech from the Throne, in addition to referring to legislation respecting the Senate that will be introduced, goes on to say:

To ensure that the redistribution of electoral districts is made objectively and impartially, you will be asked to approve a bill to establish an independent commission to recommend redistribution.

I would hope if such legislation were passed that any such commission would have regard to the important principles which the senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert) mentioned. He also referred to reform of the House of Commons. I do not presume to speak for the Government in this chamber, but I think I can assure him that the Prime Minister would be fully prepared, if the constitutional means were available, to reform that corner of the House of Commons which prevented the numerous bills to which he referred from going through last year.

Now it is not my intention to deal with any sterile statistics to attempt to determine how far have the mighty fallen or how high have the fallen been raised, but if the Government was, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition suggests, defeated and I draw to the attention of the Opposition, that it is still the Government—certainly the Liberal party was not elected.

Now the Leader of the Opposition, having referred to the results of the last election, and having given some statistical details, complains about the conduct of the Prime Minister in going to the Prime Ministers' Conference without authority from Parliament. He says:

Not that I object to his going to London—I want to make that clear—but, being the head of a minority government, the least he could have done was call Parliament and receive a vote of confidence.

I suggest that if the Prime Minister had done that it might have been necessary to postpone the Prime Ministers' Conference in order to assure his attendance, if what we have seen during the past week in the other place is any indication of what might have taken place somewhat earlier.

The honourable leader then proceeds to quote some rather stale references from the press, one of January 10, one of April 24, and another of May 15, as to the position which the Prime Minister should have taken at the conference. I now ask honourable senators what position they would have taken at the conference had they been in the position of the Prime Minister of Canada, representing the interests of all Canadians.