

The Address—Mr. Foster

• (4:20 p.m.)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Eymard Corbin for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to speak in the throne speech debate. For this privilege I thank my constituents in the Algoma riding and for the confidence they placed in me last June 25. No new member can come to this chamber without being a little awestruck by its history and traditions.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker of this house. I have already done that, as have many other hon. gentlemen. I must, however, thank you for the personal interest you showed in me when I first arrived on Parliament Hill. I am sure all new members received the same kind welcome and personal interest.

I would like to pay tribute, as did the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), to my predecessor, Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, who for the past 19 years represented the former Algoma East riding in this house. Mr. Pearson represented the riding with distinction and with a great deal of concern for and interest in the people of that constituency.

This man has an international reputation as a Nobel Peace Prizewinner, as former secretary of state for external affairs, as former president of the United Nations, and as prime minister of our country; and the latest honour bestowed upon him: to lead a commission and prepare a report for the World Bank on the future course that should be taken by the developed countries of the world in providing aid and assistance to the developing countries. However, this was not the man the people of Algoma knew as their member of parliament. He was known as a common man, a man the people could meet and talk to on the streets of Espanola, Blind River, Elliot Lake or Manitoulin island, a man who was interested in the little people of this world, who was concerned with human problems. I believe it is a measure of the man that he who had walked and worked with the kings and state leaders of the world could find himself at home with the people of Algoma East and

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

their problems of everyday life. Therefore I wish to pay tribute to the job that he did, not only as prime minister of this great country but as member of parliament for Algoma East, now the Algoma federal riding.

The new Algoma riding also takes in much of the former Algoma West riding which was so capably represented for 28 years by Mr. George Nixon. Mr. Nixon, like Mr. Pearson, was a man concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary people. I wish him well in his retirement after serving the area of Algoma West for so many years.

I congratulate all members on their election and the positions they hold in this house. We are indeed a fortunate group to have the responsibility to govern a country such as ours, only 101 years young. As well, I congratulate my friend, the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo (Mr. Marchand), on his election and on the speech he made. The hon. member is well respected in my riding, where we have some 15 Indian reserves, for the work he did as executive assistant to the minister of Indian affairs. In many ways, the hon. member typifies the over 100 new members in this house, young men who are aggressive, concerned and dedicated to the well-being of their country, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, these young men who were elected on June 25 to this twenty eighth parliament of Canada come here with high hopes that were inspired by our new Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) during the election campaign, inspired to believe that this parliament of Canada can become a more effective agent for dealing with the problems of this great country. They believe that if the old wrangling and bitterness which has beset this house in the immediate past years can be put away, if men of good faith can come to work together for a common good, a new page may be written in the history of Canada, a page of progressive and constructive government.

I believe we are concerned because of the recent problems that seem to be developing relating to rule changes for this house. These rule changes must recognize the traditions of the past, the traditional safeguards which the British parliamentary system has always afforded its people, and yet we must change so that the mountain of work which awaits hon. members here assembled can be dealt with in a careful but reasonably rapid manner. I believe that the Canadian people demand this of us, and indeed require that a more progressive, businesslike approach be adopted in the handling of the nation's business.