

strength, self-sufficiency and great independence of character. It takes a lot of imagination to think that one who had begun in such a homestead was to become the prime minister of Canada. The long road from those buildings to 24 Sussex street tells us a great deal about the man who walked that road, and about the kind of country in which he lives.

I don't think we are able to say that our country provides equality for all, but a look at the history of those small buildings and their inhabitants makes us realize that our country is one that does provide equality of opportunity. It is a great thing to think of our country as one which can permit a man to come from such humble origins and to reach the highest elected office in our land. I know, Mr. Diefenbaker, that this portrait will be hung in a gallery along with the portraits of other men who perhaps began a rung or two higher on the economic ladder. I think your presence here, and the presence of your portrait amongst those others says a great deal not only about our country but about your great strength of character and your contribution to the history of this country.

[Translation]

I should like to say that, a long time ago, I heard Mr. Diefenbaker speak. Even at the time when I left university he could be identified with the struggle for the little people, for the humble people, for those who were in need of protection against the authorities.

Later, he brought that reputation to parliament. He identified himself with the Bill of Rights and, throughout his whole career in parliament, he distinguished himself through his constant struggle for the rights of the individual and the protection of minorities.

[English]

I will have to leave to others, sir, the privilege of talking about you as leader of a party and of a government, but I am qualified I think, to talk about you as a parliamentarian. I have had the privilege for the past few weeks of sitting across the aisle from you in the house, and I can testify to your great skill in that role. I sometimes wish that equality of opportunity would incite you, sir, to make sure that more ministers than myself learn by experience of your skills.

However, I do want to say that today is an important occasion. The rest of us here—Mr. Stanfield, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Caouette—are here as representatives of our parties and the people of Canada. Mr. Diefenbaker is here as a great Canadian. He is here as one who has

contributed in a lasting way to our history, and it is in this capacity that we are privileged to honour him today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of the House of Commons, the Senate and the parliament of Canada it is an honour and a privilege for me to accept the gift of this portrait to parliament from the government of Canada.

I now invite Mr. Diefenbaker to say a few words.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Caouette and my leader, the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition: I am deeply touched by what has been said here today. It makes parliament what it is. To the Prime Minister may I say I was greatly taken by your observations when you were in Regina and visited my parents' humble home. I think it was an aphorism which will last for a long time. It was spontaneous, courteous, and humorous: "Sometimes when he is in the House I wish he were living here".

However, I want to tell the Prime Minister that from now on until further notice I am going to be the soul of moderation and I am going to await the arrival of the several ministers in absentia. I will do all this with that customary moderation that I always endeavour to display, but in greater form than heretofore, until I give further notice.

After the kind words that have been spoken here I think of the fact that in the years ahead each of those who has been prime minister will have a monument on parliament hill.

The Prime Minister mentioned my boyhood home. My father was a teacher who, in his day and generation, taught two who eventually became Prime Ministers of Canada, the Right Hon. Mackenzie King and me. History will tell in which case he did the worst job!

I think of the unveilings which will take place in the years ahead, and if the spirit that is present here today becomes translated into sculpture I can see the Prime Minister and me arm in arm with Lafontaine and Baldwin on parliament hill.

I understood originally that the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson was also to be present on this occasion but circumstances have prevented his being here. Perhaps it would have been better if he had been here, since it may well be that the words of Benjamin Franklin uttered in 1775 may apply, where he said. "If