

The Address—Mr. Kaplan

those hon. members whose eloquence has been no less than that of other days. On the contrary, we have been doing honour and lip service to a tradition of debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. This is a tradition which is as much a part of our proceedings as is the high tradition of sharp debate, of meaningful exposé and of controversy to which I have just referred.

Let me for a moment examine our traditions in the spirit that the best be preserved and enlarged and that the worst, in which I include the very one which I have risen to celebrate, be abandoned. My theme comes from the answer of the right hon. Prime Minister to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) when he observed that the Speech from the Throne has always been criticized in identical terms and would be so criticized even if it were written by the Holy Ghost. In this reply the Prime Minister revealed a state secret little known throughout the country because many Canadians believed in fact that this time the Speech from the Throne would be written by the Holy Ghost. It is exposed to us, therefore, as the handiwork, of mortal man.

In a similar vein we can expect that the government's legislative program, which will soon be introduced, will be the work of mortals. As such, the government's detailed proposals when presented will bear due praise and some valid criticism. No doubt much of both will be forthcoming. However, I suggest that the criticism and praise which have been offered during the past few days are premature. As in the case of every Speech from the Throne, irrespective of the political party which inspires it, there is not yet enough material for debate. The government's programs are not yet sufficiently before us. They are not before us because we are celebrating, indeed we are revelling in, a tradition which I hope will die with this parliament.

I have the honour to represent a new and great riding in Toronto. It is a riding which greatly admires the Prime Minister. It is also a riding with great expectations of this government. In fact, I am here in place of a distinguished Canadian, Mr. Dalton Camp, who would have been an ornament across the aisle, one of the few. My constituents supported the Liberals because they believed that a fresh approach and a critical review to rationalize all our institutions would be of benefit to this country. As the hon. Prime

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Minister observed on leaders' day, our responsibilities here increase while our time for deliberation remains constant. Every hour, indeed every minute, of the time of this house is precious. After nearly two weeks of debate we have not yet begun our significant business, and tradition precludes the commencement of government business until Wednesday.

If government business is to be postponed for a given number of days from the beginning of each session, let these days serve some useful purpose. I agree with the observations of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson); that is, there are over 100 private members' resolutions and bills before us and we might have tackled these. We might have approached this formidable list. Surely, all of us are sorry that we did not.

Our great democracy finds its shield within these walls; but what would the people of Canada think of parliament if they knew what has been going on here lately?

• (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join with previous speakers in extending to you my sincere congratulations on your election to the high office of Speaker of this house. I should like also to extend congratulations to the mover (Mr. Corbin), and seconder (Mr. Marchand), of the address in reply. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, both men did an excellent job, one which should make their constituents very proud of them.

I know that my constituents would want me to extend to His Excellency the Governor General and Mrs. Michener a sincere expression of our love, loyalty and respect and our heartfelt thanks for according us the honour and pleasure of visiting our province a few months ago. I can tell all hon. members that Her Majesty's representatives were warmly received by the people of Newfoundland and they left behind them a renewed sense of loyalty to the crown as well as a genuine feeling of pride in belonging to this great Canadian nation of ours.

It goes without saying, sir, that I am deeply honoured to have been elected by the people of St. John's West to represent them in this parliament. It is an honour that comes to few men in their lifetime, and needless to say it is one that I shall treat with respect and dedication during my term of office.