

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 23, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

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PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF PRESIDENT OF FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker: I am most happy to point out to the House that a distinguished visitor is in attendance in the Speaker's gallery. He is Mr. Achille Peretti, President of the French National Assembly. For his hosts at least, Mr. Peretti's stay in Canada, which is coming to a close today, will have been too short. Mr. President, we are greatly honoured to welcome you to our Parliament, and my colleagues and myself sincerely hope that you will long keep pleasant memories of your trip to Canada.

Very fortunately for us Mr. Peretti is accompanied by a colleague who has shown unwavering sympathy to the Canadian people and Parliament, Mr. Lucien Neuwirth, Quersitor of the French National Assembly.

[English]

On behalf of hon. members I am delighted to welcome our distinguished visitors. It is worthy of note, I think, that this is the first time a President of the French National Assembly has come to Canada as the officially invited guest of our Parliament. You have come here, sir, as a parliamentarian on a highly commendable mission of good will. You are here today as a friend and we greet you, of course, as a friend.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: This message, which was brought to us by Mr. Peretti and which he imparted earlier to us in such eloquent terms, conveys the sincere and deep-felt affection of France and the French people for Canada. On behalf of my colleagues in the House, I must tell you, Mr. Peretti and Mr. Neuwirth, that the Canadian people, likewise devoted to an ideal of liberty while respectful of the parliamentary institution, sharing your language

and your culture, keep their long-standing links of brotherhood and friendship with France.

• (2:10 p.m.)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as usual, you have said what was essential, but I am sure you will not grudge me the privilege of subscribing to your wishes. I have had the pleasure and the honour of meeting President Peretti in the past, when we were both carrying out other functions. I just want to be the spokesman of government members and to join with you in welcoming President Peretti.

[English]

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, may I, on behalf of the members of this party, associate myself with what you and the Prime Minister said. I assume that you have had an opportunity to discuss with your distinguished confrere your mutual problems. He has left his behind in France; Your Honour still sees yours in front of you here. I realize that these problems exist. I suppose, sir, you will be able to tell your distinguished colleague that you have problems which to some extent he does not have.

The very fact that I am able to address Your Honour today in one of the two official languages would indicate to him that your problems are twice as many as his. In addition, sir, there are other difficulties which we are going through right now. England has a Prime Minister, the United States has a President, France has both, but we are not sure what we have.

I hope, sir, you will express on our behalf our hope that the visit of our distinguished guest will be pleasant and happy and that he will come back again to see the Canadian west and the Canadian north.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is necessary to take any more time than to say that my colleagues and I join with you in expressing to the President of the National Assembly of France and to his colleague our very warmest greetings and our pleasure at seeing them in this chamber.