

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: At the outset, as others before me have done, I sincerely want to congratulate one of our own on his elevation to the Chair. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has recognized the work he has done in this chamber in the past, and also—and I think this is more important—the potential he has for the future in this chamber. The position held by the Speaker is one of great importance to the proper functioning of this institution. There has to be balance and impartiality from the Chair because without it the House would soon get out of tune, and from the discord of debate, chaos and confusion would result. Further, if the chamber were allowed to get out of tune too much it would lose touch with the people and with the reality of this land.

I also wish to congratulate the mover (Mr. Duclos) and the seconder (Mr. Lee) of the Address in Reply. They are two new members who certainly acquitted themselves well and showed great promise for the future. In congratulating them, I am sure that I and other members are really congratulating all the new members who are contributing to this debate.

I think it can be fairly said from the speeches we have heard in the last few days that all the new members—the new class of '74 on both sides of the House—have acquitted themselves well and in a most constructive way. This not only augurs well for their own political future, but it augurs well for the future of this chamber. They displayed a delightful blend of idealism mixed with political reality.

● (1620)

This necessary mixture after every election, infusing those who have been here before with the idealism of newcomers, gives us the potential for some of the juice that is necessary to give balance and new vitality to this time-weathered legislative institution.

Who knows, Madam Speaker—their energy and enthusiasm may even give new direction and relevance to this place. Let us not kid ourselves; we can do with a few changes around here. I was hoping for some more fundamental changes than occurred as a result of the July 8 election, but we live with the verdict of the people. Certainly I predict that after four years in this thirtieth parliament—and I also feel that since July 8 the same can be said—a lot more people in Canada will be wishing there had been a more fundamental change on July 8, and that the government opposite—not hon. members opposite but the government—which is so encrusted with the status quo and inhibited with graduates from the public service who have entered the ministerial ranks, had the potential, imagination and initiative to help resolve some of the fundamental problems facing the country. I predict that before the thirtieth parliament is over many more Canadians will wistfully yearn in retrospect that the change had been more fundamental.

Leaving aside the basic issue of which government is in and which government is out, I could almost put myself in the shoes of a new member. There are a few trappings around here in the pomp and circumstance that initiate a parliament that I think should be changed, and that are long overdue for change. Such a change would not sub-

stantially affect the deliberations of this House, but could go a long way toward bringing a tone and temper to this place.

There are pundits in the gallery, and sage philosophers across the land who come and look down on this chamber, write screeds upon screeds and reams upon reams of rhetoric about some of the inconsistencies, irrationalities and irrelevancies of this place. I must admit to those who have finally made it here, seeing it from the floor of the House and not from the gallery, that some of their perspectives might be emancipated.

Be that as it may, a throne speech debate after an election is for eight days an interesting time for all of us. The new members mix and meet with old members and with the officers of the House, and we all hear the different viewpoints of members on all sides of this institution. This institution is the personification of this land. It is the only institution wherein at one time you can say, in an allegorical way, that this country has a heart consisting of 264 vessels and with all the imperfections of any heart—with I suppose a little scar tissue around somewhere, and perhaps a little blockage of the arteries and veins. Nevertheless, this is one place where the representatives of the people can meet.

I think it is very necessary that we go through this so-called baptism of members, who sit here listening to others and begin to appreciate that there are obvious differences of opinion. Even though we do have the odd catcall from side to side those differences of opinion are based on a sincere belief that a particular point of view is perhaps a little better in resolving a problem than another point of view.

All of us are here to try to resolve in a collective way some of the basic issues confronting this land. I think it takes eight days for us to put our feet in the water before we start to swim along the channel of this thirtieth parliament in which we will all be working and fighting together over the next three, four or five years. An eight day throne speech after an election is a necessary and interesting vehicle that enables us to understand each other.

I must say I do question in terms of procedures whether it is necessary to have a speech from the Throne between sessions during the life of a parliament, when we have all got to know each other, when the issues are lined up and when we have started to debate legislation. In the last parliament I think there was a curtailment of that debate because there was not the necessity to explore and try to get the tone and temper of the land by listening to speeches in this chamber.

I should now like to come to a few oddities that, frankly, have always amazed me. We can begin by looking at some of the pomp and circumstance of this place. Some of this pomp and circumstance is based on the reality of history. For example, we see the Speaker designate dragged from the back benches by the Prime Minister, who puts his arm through the Speaker's arm and drags him, protesting, to the Chair. When I first came here I thought that was rather ridiculous, and did not appreciate it until recently. This whole performance goes right back to the days when the King used to chop off the head of the Speaker if he did not agree with him, he being the spokesman for the commoners of the land.