

The Address—Mr. Herridge

accepted unanimously in this country—a decision not dictated by the whims of the government of Canada, but arrived at as a result of wholehearted co-operation among all the provinces making up this confederation.

I come back, sir, to the point at which I started. This parliament has an appointment with destiny. We are not going to revive the recriminations and prejudices that characterized the election campaign. We in this parliament have a responsibility which transcends all others, that of preserving, maintaining and extending the boundaries of freedom. To that end, sir, I have suggested a committee on a national declaration or a bill of rights, in keeping with the international responsibilities we assumed a few months ago under the United Nations. We should assure to the individual in this country his right of appeal, when his freedoms or constitutional rights are invaded, to the supreme court which, after this session, if the government's proposal receives the support of the house, will be the highest court of appeal so far as Canada is concerned.

When amending the Supreme Court Act, I ask parliament to give to the man and to the woman, however humble they may be, wherever they may be, the constitutional right to carry their appeal to the foot of the throne when and if their constitutional freedoms are in any way interfered with. On the question of the amendment of our Canadian constitution, let us not proceed in a manner that can only arouse animosities. Let us endeavour to bring together in a constitutional convention men and women from all the legislatures of this dominion, no matter what their party may be, so that they may together in unity rebuild where necessary and desirable this country's constitutional foundations, while maintaining and assuring as fundamental and inviolable the minority rights of all our people under the British North America Act.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): In rising to speak in this debate, Mr. Speaker, I wish first to extend my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address, the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska (Mr. Boisvert) and the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Laing). In doing so I am not going through some mere formality or simply extending courtesy. I am expressing sincerely my appreciation of effort and ability when I see it demonstrated in this House of Commons.

I should also like to join with others in extending a welcome to the members from Newfoundland who now sit in this parliament. I know their stay here will be to the

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

benefit of Canada and to the advantage of the province in which they live.

I am going to make a few brief remarks with regard to the speech from the throne, before proceeding to a subject that I wished to pursue last session but was unable to do so because of its short duration. First of all, let me say that I endorse wholeheartedly the approach of and the statements made by the leader of this group, the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), when he spoke in this debate some days ago. I am pleased to note that the question of amendment of the constitution is being considered by the government, and that the government is attempting, with the provinces, to work out some convenient procedure by which that may be done here from time to time when necessary. I am of the opinion that such a move will meet with the support of the majority of the Canadian people.

I am also glad to notice that at last the government has officially, and in this parliament, recognized the seriousness of the housing situation. I listened with attention to the minister's statement yesterday, but until I hear further details and further explanations I shall not comment further on it. I trust that this government will not submit to pressure from certain groups for the abolition of domestic rent control. I have received letters from many types of organizations expressing great concern over this matter. Thousands of Canadians are anxious about this question, because they realize the inconvenience under which they would be placed should rent control be abolished now. I have received communications from trade unions, Legion branches, women's organizations, women's institutes and other groups interested in the cost of living and the cost of rent; and, as I say, I hope the government will not give way to the strong pressure that is being exercised from some directions for the abolition of rent control.

I am pleased to note that it is the intention of the government to proceed with assistance to the provinces in connection with the building of a trans-Canada highway. I am sure many people and many organizations throughout Canada will welcome this step. I presume that the government's action in this regard has been influenced to a great extent by the strong demand for some action that has grown throughout the country in recent years.

As one who represents many constituents who are particularly interested in forest conservation, I particularly welcome the reference to a measure being brought forward in this house with respect to forest conservation. While we have heard a great deal con-