

The Address—Mr. Drew

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS
IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Friday, November 13, consideration of the motion of Mr. A. H. Hollingworth for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is first of all my privilege to extend congratulations to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). Once again he holds the highest office to which anyone can be chosen by the free choice of our own people. No matter what differences of opinion we may have as to the way in which the business of this country can best be conducted, and it will be a good thing for Canada if those differences are always expressed in firm and vigorous terms, there is, I am sure, agreement throughout the house that he has and will occupy that high office with distinction and in a manner entirely in keeping with Canada's high position among the nations of the world. I most sincerely extend to him my personal good wishes for health and happiness as he carries out his great responsibilities, responsibilities associated with the whole conduct of this house and of the nation.

Many of us worked very hard to produce a different seating arrangement in this chamber. We were not successful, but we will continue to carry on that work. That, after all, is the genius and the strength of our democracy. Nevertheless, we accept the decision and rejoice that, holding the differences of opinion we do, and they are very substantial and real differences as will emerge in the discussions which will take place, we are able to meet as friends without rancour or recrimination, recognizing the vitally important fact that differences of opinion as to how the liberty, security and happiness of our people can best be ensured are in themselves the very hallmark of freedom.

At a time when there is so much bitterness and strife throughout the world, it is a happy incident of our life in this country that, while we hold firm convictions along party lines, friendships are formed between the members of the parliament of Canada which are in no way limited by the affiliations through which we seek to serve our constituents and our country.

All of us, as members of the house and as Canadians, joined most heartily in the words of welcome extended on Saturday to the President of the United States by the Prime Minister. The visit of President Eisenhower and his wife to Ottawa was a particularly

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

happy expression of the remarkable friendship between our two countries. The President occupies what is in many ways the most important political office in the world today. I think all will agree that no sign of the immense cares and burdens which he carries appeared in the buoyant and confident manner in which he expressed his belief in the growing friendship of our two countries and his faith that beyond the shadows which surround us there is hope of that peace, stability and security to which such a large part of our common effort is directed at this time. His manner as much as his words gave us new reason to hope that out of the meeting at Bermuda next month with his old and very close friend, Sir Winston Churchill, and the Premier of France, there may emerge a still wider pattern of co-operation which we in turn can warmly approve and vigorously support.

Now may I congratulate the mover of the address (Mr. Hollingworth), and the seconder (Mr. Villeneuve). Naturally, I shall not be expected to share all their enthusiasm about the outcome of the recent election, but I can thoroughly understand their personal satisfaction, and they would indeed be less than human if they did not express that satisfaction in fairly glowing terms. Each has very properly expressed his pride in his own part of Canada. That is as it should be. There is not one of us who would be worthy of his responsibility to his own constituents without a high and genuine regard for the constituency itself and those who live in it. Loyalty to Canada and our pride in its great achievements as a nation are diminished in no way by the admiration we express for that particular part of the country which sent us here to take our place in this house.

In extending congratulations to the mover and seconder I would also point out that they are both young men, and I am sure that in addition to our congratulations upon their maiden speeches we all feel a measure of satisfaction that young men and women of their age are taking an increasingly active part in the public life of their country.

I should like to mention also, Mr. Speaker, the fact that in this house today we have four lady members. Never before at any general election had more than two ladies been elected. The four who are with us now have all given distinguished public service in other fields, and I think all the members on both sides of the house will agree that the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough) has given distinguished service in the House of Commons as well. It is perhaps appropriate that she should introduce a bill dealing with discrimination against