

*The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker*

and be added to the cabinet. They will be able to do no harm to that body.

I have listened with no little interest this afternoon to my hon. friend the Minister of Justice, and I shall shortly refer to some of his arguments. He did impress me, and he must be a good counsel. For, having undertaken a hopeless task, he failed in the end to indicate the government's stand.

I wish to join, too, in congratulations to the new Prime Minister, and in both congratulations and good wishes to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition. I believe it is good to have an infusion of new blood into the house, for parliament cannot exist unless the best possible men are mobilized into public service. Our parliamentary system cannot exist if obvious and outspoken examples of enmity, and declarations of hatred and contempt, occur between members, or when there is a substitution of personal abuse for argument. The people of this country have the right to ask that while we in this house shall be outspoken in our beliefs, strong and fearless in our statements, as befits strong men with strong opinions, we refrain from abuse. Democracy and the preservation of our way of life demands that public debate do not sink to the level of abuse. During the past two or three days there have been said in this house things which might well have remained unsaid. We can carry on parliament only if we maintain its amenities, without which parliament becomes merely a cockpit for the expression of personal enmities.

I shall now deal for a moment with the speech from the throne. Several declarations that appear bear the authority and the authorship of the resolutions passed at the Progressive Conservative convention last October. I refer to the question of assistance to build a transcontinental highway. The clause dealing therewith is sedulously couched in nebulous language in the speech from the throne, and reads as follows:

A measure for assistance in the provision of a transcontinental highway will also be laid before you.

What the people of Canada want is the construction of that highway. It is necessary for the completion of confederation.

Then there is the matter of social security and the extension of the Family Allowances Act, matters also referred to in the platform of this party. But all the promises are not made here. A few are being made in the by-election in Nicolet-Yamaska. The Solicitor General (Mr. Jean) who, for various reasons, is not in the house today, made a promise of great interest to the people of Canada in the development of our constitutional set-up. On January 23 he promised that Canada soon will have a Canadian in the office of governor

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

general. When asked when that would be he said, "Very shortly." Why should a declaration such as that, representing as it does a major change in constitutional development, be made outside the House of Commons?

I should like first to touch on agriculture, which is of major interest not only to the people of my constituency and province but to the whole of the country. I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. McKay), and with much of what he said I am in agreement. He made one admission which I was glad to hear. He said, in effect, "We supported the government throughout in the British agreement." He gave his reasons. He showed that the hopes of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner)—and in these hopes he was supported by the members of the C.C.F. group—have not been justified. Now my friends to the left are trying to put themselves in the position that this party has always taken and now are supporting the stand taken by the former leader of the party, the hon. member for Neepawa (Mr. Bracken).

My hon. friend still speaks of expert planning and of the control of prices. He condemned the government, and quite properly, in regard to promoting the rise of certain prices. I ask him and his leader why, in the province of Saskatchewan, with a C.C.F. government in power, and with legislation on the statute books which permitted the control of prices, wages and commodities, they left that statute on the books only one year. Its life ran one year from April 1 to April 1. The act lived for one year and then without proclamation was permitted to die. They would be in a stronger position in their request for the continuance of price controls had they in Saskatchewan, where they had the power, carried into effect the policies that they advocate in the House of Commons, where they have not the power.

The wheat situation is serious. The Minister of Agriculture came back from Britain and spoke with unusual vigour in criticism of some of the planners who had failed so to arrange international affairs as to put Britain in a position to purchase our wheat at a fair and reasonable price. The situation with regard to agriculture today is summed up in the words of H. H. Hannam, the president of the Canadian federation of agriculture. He recently said:

The biggest problem facing agriculture in 1949 is rising cost of the things it has to buy and falling prices of things it has to sell. That in itself will be bad enough. The danger is that it could and might start a trend that could lead the Canadian economy into a period of business recession.

Our trade is diminishing with countries other than the United States. Our exports to all countries other than United States dur-