

May I say to my young friend the hon. member for Richelieu-Vercheres (Mr. Cournoyer) that he has had the privilege of listening to members on all sides of the house expressing in unrestrained terms their admiration for the qualities of the distinguished member of parliament who had held the seat which he now occupies, and held it for something over thirty-five years. I regard it unquestionably as a great compliment to the hon. gentleman himself that the constituents of Richelieu-Vercheres should have selected him as their candidate to succeed the late Hon. Arthur Cardin, and I think it is an exceptional compliment to him that when he presented himself for election he was returned by the magnificent majority which he gained in the by-election.

It really was not a surprise to some of us that the hon. member acquitted himself in the admirable manner in which he did, because we had heard before of the success which he had achieved in oratorical contests, not only in different parts of our country but in the United States as well, and we were prepared for someone who would do full justice to the occasion. All present, I believe, will admit that my hon. friend acquitted himself with great credit to himself and to the constituency he now represents. To him also I extend my warmest and best wishes for his future in this house, which I predict will be a remarkably successful one.

The leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) began the serious portion of his remarks by taking rather strong exception to the speech from the throne itself. I do not know what my hon. friend expects in a speech from the throne. I certainly did not expect any compliments from him in reference to it, but I do think he mistakes altogether the purport of the speech from the throne if, as he indicated the other day, he feels that the speech ought to contain not only an enumeration of the measures that are to be brought before parliament, but details as well.

That is not the purpose of a speech from the throne. The speech from the throne is a formal means of beginning the proceedings of parliament in both houses, and it purports to set forth in general terms the nature of the business that parliament will be expected to carry out, and also to give to members generally some appreciation of the magnitude of the task which lies before them for the session. Where measures are of exceptional importance one expects them to be mentioned, but not more than mentioned, and no speech from the throne in Canada that I have ever heard of—I should say, except one which told the house

that there would be an immediate dissolution—ever purported to set forth the whole programme in precise terms.

May I say a word about the present speech from the throne so that hon. members may, for themselves, decide whether it measures up to what should be anticipated by this House of Commons in placing before its members the nature and extent of the business of the session. After His Excellency makes personal reference to his own pleasure at meeting the members, the speech begins by referring to world conditions and international affairs. Here I wish to call the attention of the house to something that may not have occurred to hon. members. In speeches from the throne that I have listened to in this house in years gone by, and until, in fact, the last eight or nine years, any reference at all to international affairs was the last thing instead of the first mentioned in the speech from the throne. It came in as a sort of incidental reminder that the country was beginning to have some touch with outside affairs, and a single reference to an imperial conference or some meeting in another country was about all that was set forth touching upon international affairs. I contend that this speech is a reminder, and a very strong reminder, to hon. members of this house that times have changed and that the great problems which our parliaments are called upon to consider today are not so much mere domestic day to day affairs as they are these great international questions which have a bearing upon the future peace and prosperity of the world.

As I said this afternoon, a new principle is beginning to make itself felt in the minds of men in all countries. It is that peace and prosperity are indivisible and that no nation can enjoy peace if other nations are at war, nor can any nation be prosperous for long if others are not. I submit, therefore, that the problems which this House of Commons will have to consider at this session to a greater extent than ever before, will be those problems which relate to international affairs. Bringing that fact significantly before the House of Commons at the opening of the session is, I think, one deserving of special mention in any reference to the speech from the throne.

The next main division is one which has to do, specifically, with the important work being carried on by the United Nations and its several organizations. Here again is a new feature. Until the charter of the United Nations was approved, we had had prior to the war very little reference to international affairs beyond something related to treaties and the occasional reference to some meeting of