

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 17, 1947.

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

PRIVATE BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. G. P. CAMPBELL presented Bill C, an Act respecting the Bell Telephone Company of Canada.

The bill was read the first time.

THE PRIME MINISTER

BIRTHDAY FELICITATIONS

Hon. WISHART McL. ROBERTSON: Honourable senators, it is a dangerous practice, perhaps, to refer to birthdays, because it might result in unfairness to some who are omitted. However, with the consent of the Senate, I should like at this time to refer to the seventy-third birthday of the Prime Minister of Canada.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: There are several reasons why I do so. The first is that the seventy-third birthday of the Prime Minister, although maybe little different from his seventy-second or his seventy-fourth, except for the year in which it falls, is notable because of the fact that at the age of seventy-three a prime minister would not ordinarily be expected to be continuing in office. The second reason is that parliament is in session on this occasion, and the third is that the Prime Minister has just recently returned from the Old Country where, at the hands of His Majesty the King, he was made the recipient of the Order of Merit, a gift which carries with it a very high honour and one that very few hold. As a matter of fact, I think this is the first occasion on which such an honour has been bestowed on a Canadian. It is the confluence of these reasons that prompts me to refer at this time to the seventy-third birthday of the Prime Minister, and to extend to him on behalf of all members of the Senate—as I believe I am safe in doing, although I have no authority to do so—congratulations on having attained another birthday, express our satisfaction that he retains his good health and spirits, and offer our best wishes for his future well-being.

Hon. JOHN T. HAIG: Honourable senators, I should like to join with the leader of the government here in congratulating the

Prime Minister on having achieved his seventy-third birthday, and in extending to him our wishes for his good health in the years ahead. Some of us in this section of the house may not agree with all the policies and actions of the Prime Minister, but we all know that he has given earnest attention to the welfare of the people of Canada during his administration. Whether he will continue in office for another birthday or not, I do not know. I do know, however, that parliament is very seldom in session on the 17th day of December; in fact, so far as I can find from the records, this is the second time that it has happened since confederation. In wishing the Prime Minister good luck, long life and happiness on this occasion, I may say that I feel a very kind personal regard for him. I will confess to the house that when I saw in a recent issue of *Maclean's* magazine a coloured reproduction of a photograph of the Prime Minister by Karsh, I said to myself, "He looks better than I thought he really did." So I picked up my pen and dropped him a note of three lines to that effect. He replied, "I have the same opinion myself. Yours truly." I enjoy these little incidents in public life; they are very interesting.

Honourable members, we on this side of the house join with all other senators in wishing the Prime Minister of Canada long life and happiness.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Senate resumed from yesterday the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's speech at the opening of the session and the motion of Hon. Mr. Ferland for an address in reply thereto.

Hon. ARTHUR W. ROEBUCK: Honourable senators, first let me join in the delightful and time-established custom of extending felicitations to the mover (Hon. Mr. Ferland) and seconder (Hon. Mr. Gershaw) of the address in reply.

The leader of the opposition in this chamber (Hon. Mr. Haig) recently remarked—inadvertently, I think—that he did not know why we had been called together at this time. Well, it seems clear enough to me. The government has encountered a situation of very serious import to our country. It has taken the responsibility of extraordinary action designed to meet the emergency, and it has called parliament together in accordance with the best principles of democratic procedure—first that parliament may approve or disapprove its actions, and second, that