

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

The speech begins by a reference to the forthcoming visit of Her Majesty and Prince Philip. As I said the other day, when the Prime Minister mentioned this matter, I am sure we all, on every side of this house, share in the pleasure of this forthcoming visit, and we will participate in the welcome the Canadian people will be delighted to give Her Majesty and Her Majesty's consort. Perhaps at this point I might mention Prince Philip's short visit last autumn. Though it was a short and crowded visit, he managed at that time to visit Springhill and to express on that occasion the shock and grief that all Canadians felt at the disaster which had struck that coal mining town, a disaster which also filled us all with admiration at the indomitable courage shown by those people who were again stricken. The sympathy of all Canadians has gone out to that community, which I once ventured to refer to as "this George Cross community". However, sympathy alone will not be enough. It must be converted, by this parliament, into action which will restore and maintain the economic life of this community.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the speech has a few paragraphs devoted to international affairs. There will, I hope, be an occasion soon to discuss these matters more specifically, because the state of the world at the present time, and the relations of Canadians to that state, would seem to me to warrant as soon as possible a debate on the international situation. The references to that situation in the speech from the throne are so general indeed as to mean very little in relation to the concrete problems that face us, and Canada's position in respect to them.

There is a reference made, of course, to the need for enduring peace. We all appreciate that. It is perhaps realistic to say that during the year there has been little progress, unfortunately, in realizing that need for enduring peace. Certainly the evidence of progress in this regard which is given in the speech from the throne is rather unimpressive. There is some reference to progress in the field of disarmament, but the only illustration given of that progress is the drafting of an agreement for discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, which is referred to as a hopeful beginning. I take it, Mr. Speaker, that that is the drafting of the technical agreement by the conference of experts at Geneva; but when that technical agreement was discussed on a political level it soon became apparent that it was far easier to reach that kind of technical agreement than it is going to be to reach political agreement, without which technical agreement does not mean much.

[Mr. Pearson.]

There is also in the speech from the throne reference to the desirability of some form of international agreement for the control of outer space. As we look ahead now into dimensions which were hardly considered a year or so ago, I agree that there could be nothing much more important facing us internationally than the persistent and constructive effort made by the United Nations—which is perhaps the only place where it can be made—to bring this new dimension of time and space under some form of international control before the opportunity escapes us. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Smith) and those of his colleagues who worked so hard for Canada at the recent assembly of the United Nations, I think will agree with me that the effort which was begun at this assembly to reach that objective does not warrant—and I am trying to put my words in a responsible way—too much optimism that it is going to be easy to achieve. We on this side of the house will wish them well and will support them in every possible way in any endeavour they can pursue to bring about this result.

As has so often been said in the house, these over-riding questions of peace and war must, if we can possibly bring it about, be discussed and decided in this house on a non-partisan a basis as possible. That does not mean that we shall not have disagreements, because we shall; and I will mention some of them, perhaps, before I finish this afternoon. But we must always at least try to agree, and I am quite sure that we shall be able to agree on objectives even if we are not always able to agree on methods. If we and our friends cannot settle these over-riding questions, as I have called them, of peace and war, none of the other things which I am going to mention this afternoon, immediately important as they are, in the long run matter very much.

I now want to mention some of the domestic problems, questions and issues which arise in our consideration of this speech from the throne and the attitude or lack of attitude of the government toward these problems. This government has now had about a year and seven months in which to show what it can do. It is a time long enough for its method and its manners to become clear, if not its policies. In our view on this side of the house it has shown a genius not for following a straight and steady course but for confusion and contradiction, for wavering instability and, if I may add, a determination to lean positively on one man and negatively on the previous government. Its oscillating and uncertain moves, its lack of steadiness and sureness—and I will have a great deal of