

The Address—Mr. Lafreniere

have no doubt guided the Prime Minister's decision again to entrust to you that high function.

Mr. Speaker, no one here will be surprised if I take the liberty of recalling in particular the memorable day of March 31, 1958, which will forever remain engraved in the hearts and minds of all Canadians.

That historic event could not have occurred save as a result of the fruitful achievement and character of a great statesman whom all Canadians, without exception, including political opponents, have learned to love, to admire and to respect, that is to say the magnanimous successor of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Georges-Etienne Cartier (the twentieth century saviour of the Canadian confederation), the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada.

On behalf of all government members, of all my colleagues, old and new, on behalf too of the population of the province of Quebec and of Quebec-Montmorency which I particularly represent, may I be allowed, Mr. Speaker, to offer the Prime Minister our appreciation for the wisdom and foresight with which he has administered the country since June 1957, and especially for having so splendidly served, through positive action, the great cause of national unity. As I said a moment ago, never before in the history of our country had the Canadian people elected so many members to form a government. The reasons behind this extraordinary achievement are to be found in the numerous and efficient initiatives taken by a minority government in the last parliament.

In my constituency and, indeed, all across the country, people are fully aware of what the government has achieved in the last legislature.

It raised the old age pension to \$55 a month, increased veterans' allowances, earmarked \$300 million for the building of new homes, extended the period of unemployment benefits and, according to His Excellency the Governor General's speech, I now find that this period is to be further extended. It has provided for agricultural products a fair program of minimum prices based on production cost, organized a vast public works program, increased wheat exports and provided advanced payments for farm-stored wheat. It has determined and recognized the particular needs of the maritimes, and all it has achieved over there is not to be compared with all that it will do to put all parts of Canada on an equal footing. Having realized the responsibilities of Canadian statesmen, the Prime Minister and the members of his cabinet have informed us that they propose to develop our Canadian north.

[Mr. Lafreniere.]

This, Mr. Speaker, is only a very incomplete list of the government's achievements during the last parliament and these achievements benefited millions of Canadians who then found a way to prove their gratitude.

When I think of this government, which was a minority government until the last general election, I have to recall those words pronounced by Sir Winston Churchill when he described the Royal Air Force in the last war:

(Text):

Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

(Translation):

The people having understood that this government wished to get closer to them the better to serve them, got closer to the government the better to support it. I take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express the admiration which the population of Canada has felt for all the members of the cabinet who gave to the whole country a consistent example of devotion to duty of dignity and ability.

With all the ministers and members of this house, I am glad to see in the speech from the throne delivered by His Excellency that many of the above mentioned accomplishments will be further improved upon.

I wish to emphasize particularly that at the beginning of the speech from the throne, the government has expressed its intention to co-operate with all other nations in taking all possible means to apply scientific developments to the welfare of mankind rather than to the creation of weapons and to the arts of war. And this reminds me of the words of the Prime Minister speaking before the students of St. Mary's University, of Halifax, on January 31st 1958, and I quote:

(Text):

There is a new higher premium on science, on the scientist. The laboratory is to become either the cradle of humanities golden age or the mortal cockpit of mankind.

(Translation):

We should add, Mr. Speaker, that we are reassured by the mental attitude of the head of the government, who makes it a point in all his activities of raising spiritual values above material values. It would be interesting for all to know this statement of the Prime Minister, which is engraved on one of the walls of the Canadian pavillion at Brussels, in Belgium. It is as follows:

(Text):

I am of those who believe that freedom can survive in the future as it has in the past only