

Business of the House

Mr. Pickersgill: —to express in my usual modest fashion the appreciation that all of us feel on the eve of Easter for the services of his honour, Mr. Speaker, the other officers of the house, the staff, and all those associated with our labours. Perhaps I should even go so far at this moment, in an expansive spirit, as to say a kind word about the opposition.

While I realize that we are not even at the end of the session, which has been a long and exceedingly productive one, I should like to feel that we will all come back on April 3 refreshed and ready to quickly terminate this session and get on to the next, which I hope can be terminated also, or at least part of it, very quickly so we can really have some fun during this centennial year.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the senior surviving member tonight on this side of the house may I express my congratulations to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) on his temporary, and I hope short, term of office as Acting Prime Minister. We have had sufficient trouble from his immediate predecessor, and it is perhaps a good thing that this part of the session is coming to a close.

I join with him, however, in expressing our thanks to those who make it possible for this institution to survive, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, and all those associated with you. I congratulate the Acting Prime Minister for his suggestion that it has been a productive session, but the work we have done this session could have been done in two other sessions, with proper organization. If the Acting Prime Minister will use his brief authority to straighten out things on that side of the house perhaps the next session will be conducted along better lines.

I am afraid I cannot agree with the Acting Prime Minister, that the balance of this prolonged session will necessarily end very quickly following our return, because I note that the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) is in moderate health and may wish to take part in a debate with us when we return after Easter. If in the interval, refreshed from a Caribbean cruise or some such vacation, he has a change of mind, the session will end very quickly. We will then be able to begin the long awaited centennial session in the best of humour. I do not mind on this occasion, and this may not often be repeated, extending my congratulations to the government side of the house.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this seems to be an evening for senior members. As the senior member in this corner of the house, and perhaps the senior non-privy councillor here tonight, I should like on behalf of this party to express our thanks to the Acting Prime Minister for the very generous felicitations he has conveyed on behalf of the government to all members of the house. We are happy to reciprocate those good wishes.

The break that is apparently about to take place will be a very short one but we trust it will be very recuperative for us all and that we will come back prepared to do a good amount of work in the remaining part of this session. Let us hope it will not be followed by just a pro forma kind of centennial session, but one during which we will do some real work for the people of Canada whom we represent.

We join with others in expressing our good wishes to all members of the house with a special word for perhaps the most long suffering member among us, namely Your Honour.

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I should like on behalf of the members of the Social Credit party to briefly express our appreciation for the services rendered and the direction given by yourself and those associated with you. We also want to extend greetings to everyone as we are about to recess for the Easter season. We are all looking forward to this recess because we feel that perhaps it will help clear away some antagonisms that have built up. Certainly it will assist us in getting back in touch with reality, upon our return to our constituencies.

Mr. Pickersgill: Let me thank all members opposite for their kind words. I wish to reassure the hon. gentleman from Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) that my tenure as Acting Prime Minister will be very brief. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) assured me he would be back before midnight.

I should now say something that perhaps I should have said before. This coming Sunday, which is Easter Sunday, is the anniversary of the election to this house of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) and my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith). In view of the fact we will not be sitting on that day we should perhaps just note this fact and in doing so, since the Minister of Public Works is not here, I can