

SIR ROBERT BORDEN

INCLUSION OF SPEECHES MADE AT UNVEILING
OF STATUE TODAY

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the house, I hope, I beg leave to move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, that the addresses delivered today at the unveiling of the statue of Sir Robert Borden, a former prime minister of Canada, be made an appendix to the *Hansard* of this day.

Motion agreed to.

(For text of above see appendix, pages 15-19.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

CONGRATULATIONS TO LEADER OF THE
OPPOSITION ON ELECTION AND
ASSUMPTION OF DUTIES

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have another agreeable duty to perform. I would preface it by reminding the house that, at the beginning of the special session of parliament, which was officially closed this morning, I had the privilege of expressing our sincere regret that Hon. George Drew's health made it impossible for him to continue as leader of his party and of Her Majesty's loyal opposition in this house.

I also expressed our hope, which I know was shared by all hon. members, for the speedy restoration of Mr. Drew's health and for the continuance of his important contributions in the public service of our country. I know hon. members must have been delighted to see him at the ceremonies this morning which marked the unveiling of the monument to Sir Robert Borden and to note what rapid progress Mr. Drew has already made, and I am sure they will join with me in wishing him an early, complete and lasting return to his former robust health.

I now wish to extend our most hearty congratulations to the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) on his recent election as the leader of his party and on the assumption of his duties as Leader of the Opposition in this chamber. The hon. member's new position is one of the most important in our parliamentary system. In all countries which model their system on that of the United Kingdom, competent and responsible examination in the House of Commons of government policies and conduct has proved throughout the years to be one of the most convincing guarantees of efficiency and fairness in the administration of public affairs. Here in Canada the leader of the opposition is also recognized as the most likely alternative for the position of prime minister in the

event—which he and his supporters perhaps consider less unlikely and remote than do we on this side of the house—that the government should fail to have the support of a majority of the members of this house.

The hon. member for Prince Albert has had a long experience in public life and all of us in this chamber have learned to appreciate his talents, his industry, his incisiveness and his pertinacity in promoting what he has regarded as in the best interests of Canada. I do not imagine that his new responsibilities are apt to lessen his belief that the most urgent requirement in that regard is to bring about the downfall of this government; and to, I am sure, the satisfaction of those who sit on the other side of the house, I promise him that we will do our best to provide him with a long period in which to exercise his pertinacious efforts towards that objective.

He and I have disagreed on many occasions and I expect that we shall continue to do so perhaps quite frequently in the future. That is only natural in view of our respective positions. But I hope that we shall be able to disagree in a manner in keeping with the high standards of parliamentary debate and that despite our disagreements we shall continue to respect the sincerity of purpose of one another and our common desire to be of real service to our fellow citizens.

I extend to the Leader of the Opposition our sincere good wishes in his new position and I wish to assure him quite seriously that I will be ready at all times to discuss with him in advance matters which need not be controversial on party lines and about which national unity might perhaps be best served by solutions that we could all recommend to those whom we represent in parliament.

(Translation):

I also wish to congratulate the hon. member on the excellent French he used in the few sentences in this other official language of our people when he addressed the convention at which he was elected leader of his party last December.

Finally, in conclusion, I ask Mrs. Diefenbaker to rest assured that we associate her in our minds in the congratulations and good wishes which we are conveying to her husband today, for we are well aware of the important part which she will play in helping him in the appropriate performance of his new responsibilities.

(Text):

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): May I join the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in extending congratulations to one of our number who has been elevated to the high office of Leader of the Opposition. I am sure that irrespective of our parties in this house we recognize the importance of the office to