

of the session and the motion of Hon. Mr. Bois, seconded by Hon. Mr. Smith (Kamloops), for an Address in reply thereto.

Hon. Calvert C. Pratt: Honourable senators, I would like to make reference to some of the matters dealt with in the Speech from the Throne, but first I would join with our colleagues who have spoken to this motion to compliment the mover and seconder on the practical and helpful manner in which they opened this debate. Unfortunately I was unable to be present when those gentlemen spoke, but I read their speeches with great interest. I wish also to extend a word of welcome to the honourable senators who have recently joined our ranks.

I am sure it will meet with general approval of all honourable senators if I express—although I am a few days late in doing so—a word of congratulations and hearty birthday greetings to our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Mr. St. Laurent, and wish him many more years of family happiness and useful public service.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Pratt: As the Speech from the Throne indicates, the subjects we have before us this session are in two major categories, those that have to do with international affairs and those of chiefly local significance. This distinction is, of course, usual, but it stands out all the more forcibly when national tensions flare up in many parts of the world, as has been the recent experience. Major divisions among countries of the world today are fraught with terrible danger. These divisions are accentuated by difficulties recurring in areas such as the Middle East, and create situations of great alarm. These international problems can run us to the brink, if not into the abyss, of world disaster. Under the critical circumstances of the present times, they must have a priority of attention and the most loyal and undivided endeavour. I do not mean to suggest we should have any lessening of concentrated effort in matters of purely local concern; in fact, the more effort and public awareness we have right down the line, the better for all.

We in this country must be on guard, as must the people of all democracies, against the issues of an international character becoming mixed with those of purely local political consequence. In these days of atomic energy, and when the guided missiles, hydrogen bomb experiments, and so forth, are just day by day news in the press, we all realize, of course, that measures calling for relief from international tensions are of the greatest importance, not only to us here, but to the whole human race. For that reason, I would

say again that we must under no circumstances allow our thoughts, our policy and our activities in the matter of international affairs to be tinged with local political colour.

I think it proper to pay tribute, and very sincerely so, to the honourable Leader of the Opposition in this chamber (Hon. Mr. Haig) for the fair and thoroughly non-partisan attitude he takes on these international issues. I feel that fact is generally recognized. But I would not by my words of tribute to him wish to convey the suggestion that the proper attitudes in these matters have not been well maintained in this house.

Actually, in view of the gravity of the times, I would like to see political party affiliations disregarded entirely in the selection of representatives of Canada for the complex and varied organizations of the world, where solutions of world difficulties are being sought. In periods of war there have been many instances of such practice in the democracies, and in the efforts to avert war the same broad policy might well prevail.

I can well imagine some persons saying "That is a good idea, but politically impossible." All I would say to that is that politics is cheap stuff compared to the riches of the fullest possible contribution to world peace at this time. We in this country should not have a political dividing line among our elected representatives in these matters, where one group recognize their duty to work progressively and constructively, and the other group feel their responsibility calls only for criticism. I am glad to think we employ a helpful policy whereby parliamentary representatives from all political parties attend the United Nations proceedings as observers; I believe they sit in as fairly intimate consultants on inside policy discussions.

Canadian people, irrespective of party affiliation, I am sure, are proud of the world recognition that has been given to the part that the Honourable Mr. Pearson has taken in international deliberations and in the leadership generally that has been given by Canada in these times of crises. Let us back up and strengthen this leadership in every way possible.

The Speech from the Throne illustrates the world-wide activities of this nation. They include the need for maintaining the basic unity of the Commonwealth, which is a policy accepted by everyone. It rightly, I think, comes first in the many references to the international scene. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is also mentioned, and I would like to pay tribute, as others have