

*Birthday Wishes to Mr. Diefenbaker*

I am sure members of the house will understand that my reference today extends beyond the outstanding role of the right hon. gentleman as a House of Commons man. His great imprint here has made an even more enduring mark upon the country he has served in so many capacities, and in particular as prime minister. If I may speak very personally, sir, I know the esteem with which he is held by the people of my part of Canada. As the premier of a province I worked with the right hon. gentleman, and I know how deeply that esteem is deserved.

The right hon. gentleman has won a lasting place in the history of this parliament and the affection of the people of Canada. We have been personal colleagues for many years. It is a great privilege and a great personal pleasure to join other members of this house in extending to him congratulations on his birthday and to wish him many happy returns and many full and active years.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I could not possibly attempt to match the charm and grace with which the Prime Minister introduced this subject. I wish to join him and the Leader of the Opposition in extending our very best wishes to the gentleman on his birthday.

I have not been a member of this house for a very long time, but I had the honour of sitting here when he was prime minister and again when he was leader of the opposition. One could never fail to notice the way in which his very rising from his seat electrified the house, whatever the electricity produced. One could also not fail to note his very great love for this institution and his devotion to parliament as a place of democratic battle. "Battle" I think is the appropriate word.

It is with very great pleasure, sir, that all of us in the New Democratic party wish him many happy returns, and wish him health so he may continue to make his unequalled and incomparable contribution to this house.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, in my own name and on behalf of my colleagues of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, I am happy to join the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), as well as the acting leader of the New Democratic party to extend my warmest congratulations and my best wishes to the former Prime Minister and former

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Leader of the Opposition and now hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) on his birthday.

I am always surprised to see him so young and so combative, but I have learned to know him especially since I have been in the house and I understand better why he stays so young and so active. Knowing his love for work and politics, it is easier to understand why he remains so young and so able.

In closing, I would like to wish him good health and a long life among us, because his presence is always for us a source of incentive and a cause of increasing wonder.

[English]

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, nothing can come in one's life to equal the unity of feeling in the House of Commons that from time to time indicates the oneness of this institution. The longer hon. members are in parliament the more they will love this institution. To the young members who have just come in I would say that for the first six months after you are here you will wonder how you got here. Then after that you will wonder how the rest of the members ever got here.

Words fail me to express my appreciation to the right hon. Prime Minister for his very gracious and eloquent words. I was particularly impressed by one statement, that he hoped that for years to come he would have the opportunity of joining with me in celebrating my birthday. I am glad to have that assurance from him because last fall, among all the honours I received, a Jewish congregation in Vancouver gave me the Torah, the Tree of Life. When I made inquiries as to what it meant I was informed that it meant I would live as long as Moses, one hundred and twenty years. I am told that when that information was relayed to Ottawa there was consternation. That consternation has been ended now by the Prime Minister with the realization that such an eventuality would not do harm to this institution. I thank him again, and if the result of the placing of this flower on me will allow me to approach the results he achieved by that means I will be happy.

To my own leader I express my deep appreciation for the words he has spoken. To the leader of the N.D.P., that great exponent of parliament in its finest form, I give my thanks and appreciation, as I do to the acting leader of the Ralliement Cr ditiste. I say thank you to all honourable members from the bottom of my heart.