

Right Hon. John G. Diefenbaker

heritages with a close affinity to the land and its diverse riches and with great pride in their ability to earn their living as they choose. They make their living in the agricultural sector, the potash mining sector, the small business sector and in major academic and research institutions which are located in Saskatoon. Also important in my riding are the aged who contributed so much to our history and the youth who represent the hope for our future.

Saskatchewan residents are not alone in their admiration and love for Mr. Diefenbaker. The things that he stood for and, even more significantly, that he accomplished on behalf of Canadians transcend regional loyalties to a native son. That was pointed out by the speaker who spoke prior to me. This great man holds a special place in the hearts of all Canadians. John Diefenbaker was passionately committed to human liberty. His great achievements in that realm have become fundamental to our Canadian way of life.

Mr. Diefenbaker instituted the Canadian Bill of Rights, as was mentioned earlier, so that every Canadian's right to fair and equal treatment and to individual freedom would be forever entrenched in the Constitution. Among other significant achievements, he brought Indian people the too long denied right to vote. He introduced the baby bonus. He took the first step on the road to universally available medicare with his federal hospital insurance program, and he increased the old age security pension. He also appointed the first Indian to the Senate, the first woman to Cabinet, and the first Ukrainian Canadian as Minister of Labour.

One may ask why John Diefenbaker fought so hard for human rights in this country. I believe it was because he could not tolerate discrimination and he was determined to guarantee that Canadians, particularly new Canadians, would live free and equal in their country.

● (1750)

Today, we recognize that our cultural identity as Canadians is enriched, because we all have diverse backgrounds. We have Mr. Diefenbaker to thank for our recognition of and pride in that multicultural identity. He was the first Prime Minister of what he himself referred to as "mixed racial origin", being neither of pure British or pure French descent. That made him, in his own words, "a Canadian first and foremost". In recognition of this, he changed the Canadian census regulations so that we could say proudly "Canadian" in response to the question on racial origin.

In his maiden speech to the House on June 30, 1940, John Diefenbaker challenged his colleagues to "build up in this country an unhyphenated Canadianism that is dominant, proud and strong". These words were both prophetic and descriptive. As Prime Minister of Canada and through all of his nearly 50 years as a Member of Parliament, John Diefenbaker was dedicated to achieving his goal of Canadianism.

When we honour "Dief" by erecting a statue on the Hill, we must create a statue that epitomizes a dominant, proud and strong Canadian whose legacy to future Canadians demands permanent recognition. A statue to such a man is an absolute

necessity and, as I said earlier, it is long overdue. I am in complete support of my hon. colleague's motion to pay tribute to the accomplishments of John Diefenbaker by placing his statue on Parliament Hill along with those statues that have already been erected.

A statue commemorates a man for his accomplishments. But what kind of monument can one build to commemorate a man's spirit? I like to think that Mr. Diefenbaker's spirit, embodied by his lifelong commitment to and profound belief in a multicultural Canadian society, lives on today. I am proud to say that the seeds for a monument in that spirit have already been planted in my constituency of Saskatoon East.

I must provide some history in order to explain. When the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker became Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan in 1969, he announced his intention to bequeath to his alma mater his papers, memorabilia and personal library and his Sir John A. Macdonald collection of original manuscripts, books, artifacts and historic furniture. This intention was formalized in Mr. Diefenbaker's last will and testament.

The University felt that such a generous and important gift should be housed in an appropriate setting that would allow public access to the materials and would preserve them for the future. Thus the idea of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker Centre was born. It contains a working archives where the countless original documents and other papers accumulated by Mr. Diefenbaker during a lifetime in politics are available for research to students and professors from across this great country.

It is also a public museum displaying Mr. Diefenbaker's personal memorabilia as well as the many gifts presented to him when he was Prime Minister. These gifts are now the possession of all Canadians, through the Diefenbaker Centre.

In addition, the museum contains exact replicas of Mr. Diefenbaker's office in the East Block and of the Privy Council Chamber as it looked when he was Prime Minister in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The presence of these two rooms in the Diefenbaker Centre in Saskatchewan makes our federal system of government more relevant to western Canadians, because there are many Canadians who live thousands of miles away from Ottawa who never come here to visit and see the Chamber in which I am speaking today.

John Diefenbaker turned the sod at the site of the Diefenbaker Centre on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River on September 20, 1975. Construction of the Centre began in the spring of 1978, with money for the \$3 million building coming from across Canada. Six provinces, one Territory and the federal Government made substantial contributions to the Centre's capital costs. Generous donations were also made by many individual Canadians as well as by organizations and clubs. The Diefenbaker Centre is a legacy to and from Canadians of every part of the country.

The Right Hon. John G. Diefenbaker Centre opened to the public on June 12, 1980. Since then, Canadians from every