

House of Commons
HOUSE OF COMMONS

REFERENCE TO ILLNESS OF LEADER OF THE
OPPOSITION

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that hon. members in every part of this chamber would wish me to say what is in all our minds at this time, and that is how sorry we all are that the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. George A. Drew, is unable to be present with us at this opening of parliament.

We were all deeply shocked when we heard last November that he had been stricken suddenly by a serious illness. Fortunately after some days of anxiety we were relieved to hear that he had safely passed the critical phase of the malady. Subsequently from time to time we were most grateful to learn that he was making steady progress toward complete recovery although he had to remain in hospital for several weeks.

All of us, his friends in this house—and I am sure this is also true of his hosts of friends outside of this house—sincerely hope that the present rest which his medical advisers have persuaded him to take will enable him to regain completely his strength and that it will not be long before his health and his usual vigour will have been fully restored and that he will be able to be back with us in the house.

Although the request may be somewhat unusual I am sure that every one of us, wherever he sits in the house, would be grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, if you would in the meantime convey to Mr. Drew our most sincere greetings and good wishes.

Hon. W. Earl Rowe (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I must take advantage of this opportunity to indicate the keen appreciation of the associates of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) on this side of the house of the kind good wishes which the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has so generously expressed today. I realize, as do many others, that it is a great tribute to the present-day efficiency of modern medical science that the Leader of the Opposition has been able to get through the very critical days of his illness. However, I am most happy to report, after having visited him yesterday, that he is making a very rapid recovery and indeed his health has been restored to a greater degree than I had expected to find. I feel most confident, and I am sure he does, as well as his doctors, that he will be returned to the health and vigour which the Prime Minister has indicated is his usual state of health.

[Mr. Speaker.]

OATHS OF OFFICE

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 1, respecting the administration of oaths of office.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the house that when the house did attend His Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both houses of parliament. To prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy, which is as follows:

Honourable members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

It affords me great pleasure to greet you as you resume your parliamentary duties at the beginning of this new year.

Since you last met, the people of Canada have been given an opportunity of extending once more an affectionate welcome to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the queen mother. They have also had the pleasure of greeting again the consort of our sovereign, the Duke of Edinburgh, who came to attend the British Empire and Commonwealth games held in Vancouver during the summer and to visit northern parts of Canada.

While there is hopeful evidence that the increasing strength of the free world has lessened the likelihood of aggression, the terrible destruction that war would bring to North America and indeed to all mankind has been magnified by the increase in the number and effectiveness of atomic and thermonuclear weapons and the means of delivering them.

My ministers are convinced that, while the resources of diplomacy must never be neglected in the search for peace, the efforts of the free nations in building their deterrent forces must be maintained. To this end, Canada was represented at the London and Paris conferences which formulated an alternative to the European defence community and provided for the entry of the Federal Republic of Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. You will be asked to approve the agreements reached at those meetings.

Our country continues to give full support to the United Nations. The Canadian delegation took an important part in the deliberations of the recent meeting of the general assembly in New York. It is earnestly hoped that the adoption of the resolution on disarmament introduced in the political committee by the Canadian delegation may lead to agreement on an effective system of international safeguards.

While no final settlement has been reached in Korea, the lessening of the threat of renewed aggression in that area has made possible the withdrawal of a substantial portion of the Canadian forces.

At the invitation of the Geneva conference Canada has accepted the heavy responsibility of serving on the armistice commissions which have been formed to supervise the restoration of peace in the associated states of Indo-China.

Last autumn our nation was the host at the annual meeting of the consultative committee of the Colombo plan. You will be asked to approve Canada's continued participation in the plan as well as in the United Nations' technical assistance program.