

by the eloquent mover of the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne, and it is with infinite pleasure that I second the motion.

Right Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER: We have all listened with great interest and still greater pleasure to the observations with which we have been favoured by the hon. member for York, N.B. (Mr. McLeod) and the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lavallee). I say we have all listened with interest and pleasure, though some of us, and I amongst them, cannot subscribe to many of the statements both of fact and of opinion made by these hon. gentlemen. Notwithstanding all differences, however, we on this side of the House are all happy to join with our friends on the other side in extending congratulations to both the mover and the seconder of the Address. My hon. friend from York, N.B.—if he permits me to apply that term to him—came into this House preceded by a reputation earned in another sphere; and it is only fair to him to say—and it is a great pleasure for me to say—that on this occasion he has been quite equal to his reputation. Though I differ with him in many things, as I said a moment ago, I recognize the felicitous manner in which his views were expressed. He was especially happy in the terms in which he expressed to Their Royal Highnesses the sentiments of deep sympathy which we and all the people of Canada have felt for them in the cruel ordeal through which they have passed, an ordeal which involved for the one long days and weeks of suffering almost between life and death, and for the other a long agony of suspense and anxiety. It is the simple truth, as has been said by my hon. friend from York, N.B., that there was sincere rejoicing among all classes of the community at the almost miraculous escape of Her Royal Highness, not solely on account of the high position she occupies, but still more because of the many domestic virtues and womanly graces, the many high qualities of heart and mind, of which she has given so many evidences during her short stay amongst us. All classes of Canadians have learned, and every day learn more and more, to appreciate these qualities of mind and heart, and daily the prayers from millions of Canadian homes rise fervent to Heaven for her complete recovery.

Perhaps my hon. friend will not be surprised, however, if I say that when he departed from this subject and dealt with

the public business of the country, his remarks were not altogether so felicitous, at least in my opinion. He adopted toward the Administration, so far as the course of public business is concerned, a most eulogistic tone, a tone which, I believe, was not altogether in accord with the sober truth of the record. But if I say this it is not at all because I wish to take issue with my hon. friend on this point or to quarrel with him; for, remembering that once I myself was young, I know that it is always allowable to youth to be enthusiastic and even to carry enthusiasm not only to the extreme limit of exaggeration but even to the extreme limit of blind misconception.

Had my hon. friend been in this House before, I am sure he would have asked some explanations from the Government for having been so tardy in summoning Parliament together, for having allowed the months of November and December to pass without moving a finger toward the despatch of the business of the country. My hon. friend is not aware, as you, Mr. Speaker, and I are aware, and as the Government I am sure cannot have forgotten, that it is a part of the law of this Parliament—the well-recognized though unwritten law—that Parliament ought to meet in the early fall and in any case not later than the month of November unless some great public event should interpose. Indeed, so well recognized is this law that the financial year was some years ago, changed in consequence of it, so as to run from the 1st of April to the 31st of March, instead of, as before, from the 1st of July to the 30th of June. What can be the reason why Parliament was not summoned as it should have been summoned, in the early fall? What is the public reason which can be invoked by the Government for having been so tardy and dilatory? What reason can there be except the reason which causes the insolvent debtor with a small list of assets and a long list of liabilities to put off the day when he must meet the creditors to whom he must give an account? So the Government has been putting off, and putting off, and putting off, until the very last moment when they had to meet Parliament, their creditor and their master—and meet it with a very small list of assets and a long list of liabilities.

Had my hon. friend from York, N.B., been longer in Parliament he would have noticed something new on the Treasury benches. My hon. friend from Bellechasse may well have noticed it, for he has been here for two sessions. There are two

[Mr. Lavallee].