

When I rose, sir, to take part in a similar debate a year ago I raised my voice in protest against the time lost in the house in the traditional and extended congratulations which are usually showered upon the mover and the seconder of the address. In parliament, as in many other phases of our national life, we have to make up our minds to leave some of the habits of yesterday behind. These are days of change and reform and having this in mind I hope that the mover (Mr. Tremblay) and the seconder (Mr. Tucker) will fully understand and appreciate the motive which lies behind my comparative silence with respect to their very excellent efforts. Were they not both members of His Majesty's armed forces, I would have refrained from creating another precedent in this debate. Both of them are comparatively young men; both of them have served with distinction in two wars. That in itself constitutes a word of tribute more eloquent than my words could convey.

It is appropriate that the first point I cover in this address should be the war. It is not yet won. True, we have reached the stage where the fear of losing it has been to a large extent removed, but with the most serious fighting and the heaviest casualty lists yet to come, it is in my opinion utter nonsense to talk as though the war were practically over. Would to God it were!

Mere words will fail to appraise appropriately the contribution of Canada's armed forces at sea, on the land and in the air. Their magnificent part in the pulverization of vital German industries; their heroic fight in Sicily and Italy; their daring exploits on the oceans of the world, have added a new lustre to Canada's already great reputation among the nations of the globe. It can be safely said—I should say, proudly said—that the Canadian armed forces rate second to none among the war's very best participants.

Labour, agriculture, industry and business generally have made on the civilian front a giant contribution towards the winning of the war, but the brunt of our effort is being carried by those in our armed forces. Our contribution as civilians, however great, suffers in contrast to theirs. When this war is over, this Canada of ours which has been ready to give and to pay heavily to win the war must equally be prepared to do the same thing for the establishment and the maintenance of peace and for the rehabilitation of our armed forces.

It is difficult to say what the general terms of the speech from the throne mean for the veterans of this war. Only close scrutiny of

the legislation proposed will give any indication of how far the government is prepared to go. When our men and women come back they will be thrown into competition for a livelihood in our nation with those who have been receiving a very much larger share of the national income than our fighting forces. Let me therefore impress upon the government the necessity of giving to our discharged men and women sufficient aid and support to put them on better than an even basis so far as cash is concerned so that they will have a fair chance in the competitive struggle for a fuller and more abundant life. Our forces have not been niggardly in their sacrifices for us. Let us not be niggardly with them when it comes our turn to pay.

The government has never been too frank with the people of Canada with respect to the conduct of the war. It is high time it was. Our people are demanding satisfactory and straightforward answers to these questions:

(1) What does the abandoning of the seventh and eighth divisions in Canada mean?

(2) What does it involve?

(3) Why were these two additional divisions constituted in the first place?

(4) What were the underlying reasons for the change?

(5) What is being done with our big home defence army?

(6) Is it going overseas?

(7) Is it going to remain in Canada and if so, is its personnel to be directed back to civilian activities?

Recently the three chiefs of the navy, army and air force were transferred overseas. Does this mean that the government believes that all danger to Canada has been largely removed? If so, why the necessity for the maintenance of this big home defence army? Even at this late date it is essential that the whole story of the home defence army's constitution and its present and future role should be explained fully and frankly by the government to this house and to the people of Canada.

Canadians, too, are confused as to what is going on overseas. Why was the Canadian Army constituted as it was in the first place? Whose idea was it? If the plan was good, why was it abandoned? If it was bad, why was it approved in the first place?

Many rumours are in circulation regarding the resignation of General McNaughton. Public interest demands that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) should at once give a full and frank explanation of the facts in this regard, letting the chips fall where they may.