

in accord with the dominant feelings of the people that I have the honour to represent in this House. Before going any further, allow me, Sir, to follow the example of the hon. gentlemen who have preceded me, and to add my humble quota of homage and praise to the tributes paid for more than two weeks, to the memory of the man who has occupied, and will continue to occupy such a large place in the hearts of the Canadians, and more particularly, of the French Canadians.

I have no hesitation in saying that nowhere Sir Wilfrid Laurier was more loved, more revered than in the vast regions of Lake St. John, and Chicoutimi and Saguenay; to prove that assertion, suffice it to say that it is largely, very largely—to the prestige of the illustrious dead that I owe my election with more than 1,000 majority I think I can say with the utmost confidence that nowhere our great compatriot will be more sincerely mourned because we feel that by his death we have lost a great benefactor, and that the country has lost the greatest of its citizens.

He is dead, but our hearts will continue to cherish his memory and the history of his life will always be a high example for the coming generations.

Now, Sir, allow me to join the hon. gentlemen who have taken part in the debate and to offer my congratulations to the proposer and seconder of the Address in answer to the speech from the Throne and, who have so ably acquitted themselves. I think it unfortunate, however, that the Government has departed from the old established rule—the unbroken rule, I think—of having one of the two speeches in French.

On the present occasion, more than on any other, the custom should have been adhered to, because the French Canadians, like the English Canadians, are coming home from the battlefields after a glorious victory.

However, I think that I find a reason which would seemingly justify them to a certain extent; it is that the present Government is a war government that is rather crippled—their big guns not being in their proper places. They thought it proper and necessary to place in the limelight, to uphold their ground, gallant men who gained distinction on the battlefield and who surely have it at heart to maintain their reputation in this House and it seems to me that on that score the Government could not have made a better choice.

Now, Sir, let me state that I have the honour of representing one of the large—if

not the largest—but surely one of the most interesting counties in the country. With few exceptions its inhabitants are French Canadians, and I would even venture to say that in this respect it occupies the foremost place among the counties throughout Canada, and that is probably one of the reasons why I regret my inability to express myself in the language of the majority, which fact naturally and almost invariably drives out almost every hon. member on the other side of the House. I do not intend to find fault with them on that score because if we were in the same circumstances, if we could not understand them, we might possibly do likewise; but all the same this much I am sure of, we would see that our duty was done and that the business of this House was not suspended.

Let us say here that we are as proud of being French Canadians as citizens of other nationalities are proud of the race to which they belong.

Why would we not be proud of being French Canadians when we can claim to be the progeny of those haughty Gauls who for so long resisted Cæsar and his all but insuperable legions? Why would we not be proud of being French Canadians when we know ourselves to be the offspring of that heroic France who for ten centuries waged war throughout the earth, almost always victoriously, for the sake of justice, civilization and freedom, and who for over four years, in a struggle unexampled in the annals of mankind, startled the world by opposing German barbarity? Finally, we are proud of being the descendants of the first inhabitants, the early settlers of this country. Our ancestors fought along while under the flag of France but, Sir, when that flag had to re-cross the seas, defeated but still radiant with honour and glory, does not history teach us that they served their new country with the same prowess and the same devotion?

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend—besides I lack the ability—to give a lecture on history, but I am pleased to recollect that at the last session an hon. member on the other side of the House, undoubtedly wearied by the unceasing reproaches heaped ever and anon upon the French Canadian race, recalled to his friends the part played by the French Canadians in our annals; he recalled the years 1775 and 1812. I am also pleased to remember that many other members on the other side, those whose reputation as French-haters is best known throughout the country, stated that there was no better, no more valorous soldiers on the