

without question, the war which Great Britain has to carry out in South Africa against the Transvaal Republic. All Canadians, irrespective of party ties, have stood up nobly for the mother country in this crisis in her history, and have, in no uncertain tones, expressed their intention that Canada should send a certain number of volunteers to fight side by side with the soldiers of the Queen. Before that great outburst of popular feeling and sympathy, the government thought it their duty to fit out and despatch a contingent, without first consulting parliament. I believe the government did right in taking that course, and that their action is endorsed by the almost entire population of our country.

We have, in Canada, government by the people and for the people, and there could not possibly exist any doubt as to the endorsement of the government policy by the representatives of the people on that question. We are a British colony, and we owe Great Britain a debt of gratitude on account of the large sum of liberty we are enjoying under her flag.

The government, in fitting out and sending the contingents to South Africa, have complied with the conditions laid down by Great Britain herself. There was no interference with our constitution, and under the circumstances, as I said, the government did right and as they were bound to do.

Some newspapers seem to think that the people in the province of Quebec are somewhat in lack of loyalty. No more ungrounded, no more unjustifiable charge could be levelled at our people. The French Canadians never lacked loyalty to the British Crown, and if ever, in the past, acts of disloyalty, in the true acceptance of the word, were perpetrated, the perpetrators of those acts are to be found elsewhere than in the ranks of the French Canadians. We, French Canadians, never wished to change our allegiance, realizing as we do, that under the protection of Great Britain, we enjoy as large a sum of liberty as is to be found in any country of the world.

We, French Canadians, also wish to see the British flag majestically waving over all the seas; we also wish to see the British troops victorious, and at each reverse of the British arms during this hard-fought war, our warmest sympathies went forth to that venerable and glorious Queen who, for over sixty years, has presided over the destinies of the British Empire.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker—for this House, it seems to me, is anxious that I should draw these remarks to a conclusion—but I may assure the hon. gentlemen that I am not less anxious than they are to resume my seat; let me tell them that it is always a new pleasure for hon. members, on both sides of the House, to see the hon. leader of the opposition, resume his seat at the opening of each succeeding session,

Mr. GEOFFRION.

more hale, more hearty and more vigorous than ever. One would be inclined to think that for the hon. gentleman, the role of leader of the opposition is a pledge of longevity and good health. And I think I am but voicing the feeling of the hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House in expressing the wish that long may he continue to occupy the post he now fills so well.

As to the right hon. leader of the House and his colleagues, may they long continue to administer public affairs with the same wisdom as in the past, and the people will give them credit for it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Mr. Speaker, it now becomes my very agreeable duty to congratulate the hon. gentlemen who have moved and seconded the address in answer to the speech. I may say that these gentlemen both succeeded very eminent members of this House. The position they are called upon to fill requires, in order that they may compare at all favourably with their predecessors, very great ability and very great knowledge. All of us agree in lamenting the loss, to which the hon. mover referred, of the late Speaker of this House, and all of us concur in the eulogium that was passed by that hon. gentleman upon his distinguished predecessor. I am happy to be able, from the brief acquaintance we have all had the pleasure of making with the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Gould), to congratulate the House, and to congratulate my hon. friend the leader of the government, upon having secured in the successor to the late Speaker a gentleman whose ability has already been made manifest to the House by the very able manner in which he has moved the motion placed in his hands. I may say, also, that the hon. member for Verchères (Mr. Geoffrion) succeeds, as we all know, one of the most distinguished members who has ever occupied a seat on the floor of this House on either side. The late Hon. Mr. Geoffrion brought to this House not only signal professional ability, which placed him in the front rank of professional men and constitutional lawyers, but that high personal character and that wide acquaintance with public affairs and that independent spirit in dealing with them, which made him an ornament to the House, and caused us deeply to regret his loss. Although I have not been able to follow his successor, the present member, bearing the same name, and of the same family, as well as I would have liked to do, yet, so far as I have been able to form a judgment, I think we may all congratulate ourselves that able and distinguished as the late member for Verchères was, he has been succeeded by a gentleman who bids fair to become a very valuable acquisition to the House of Commons.