

*Leader of the Opposition*

and serious that I approach my task with very real humility and a profound consciousness of my own limitations.

In the days to come, I shall endeavour to discharge those duties in a manner not unbefitting our British parliamentary traditions, and, above all, I shall keep ever before me that, as presiding officer, I must exercise fairness and impartiality as between all members in the House of Commons and be, as has been said in this house "the protector of the rights of every individual member." I fully realise that only strict observance of these obligations will enable me to gain and retain the confidence and receive the advice, counsel and assistance of all hon. members, without which no Speaker can govern the conduct and decorum of this house.

To obtain that confidence I shall conscientiously strive and so far as in me lies I shall endeavour to prove worthy of the trust which you have this day committed to me.

## LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

REFERENCES TO THE SELECTION OF HON. R. B. HANSON, MEMBER FOR YORK-SUNBURY

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, to adjourn this house with a view to having it sit again to-day would under the rules require a formal notice of twenty-four hours. In the circumstances I propose to move that the house suspend its sitting until three o'clock. Before, however, that action is taken, I should like to avail myself of the earliest possible opportunity to extend to the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) my warmest congratulations—and in so doing I speak also on behalf of all hon. members on this side of the house, and I think I may say on behalf of the house as a whole—upon the confidence which has been expressed in him by the members of his party and upon his assumption to-day of the office of leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition in this House of Commons.

May I say to my hon. friend that his choice as the one to become the leader of the opposition at this time did not come at all as a surprise to those of us who have been with him in previous parliaments. My hon. friend has had great experience in parliamentary life; indeed I imagine that only a few members of this house have served for a longer time in parliament. Though not a member in the last parliament, the present leader of the opposition has been in this house for a period of some fourteen or fifteen years. During that time he has taken a very active part in its proceedings. We know him to be a forceful debater; we know he has been

[Mr. Speaker-Elect.]

very active in the proceedings of the commons generally. He has occupied important positions, as chairman of different committees of the house, and as a minister of the crown. If I am not mistaken my hon. friend is one of the two members of his party in this house to-day who have held portfolios in previous administrations. I should, of course, say that three hon. members opposite have been members of a previous administration, but I think only two of them actually held portfolios. My hon. friend was Minister of Trade and Commerce for a year or more in Mr. Bennett's administration. His present desk-mate, the hon. member for Yale (Mr. Stirling) was Minister of National Defence in Mr. Bennett's administration for about the same time. The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe) became a member of the same administration, but unfortunately for him there was a change in the administration before there was time to have him given a portfolio.

The parliamentary experience of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition will be of the greatest value, not only to him in the position which he now occupies but also to the House of Commons itself. I think I may say that no one in this house has a better knowledge of the responsibilities and anxieties which go with the position now occupied by my hon. friend than I have. For some seven years in all, I had the privilege of occupying the seat which he now occupies, so I know something of what is expected of a leader of the opposition and, as I have said, something as well of his responsibilities and anxieties.

Speaking of responsibilities and anxieties I think I may say that at this time of great peril in the affairs of the world, at this very solemn hour, all of us who are members of this parliament will be conscious alike of responsibilities and anxieties which I am equally sure it will be our desire to share. Just as the few free nations that still remain and those that until recently were free are looking for all the help they can get; just as England and France are sharing to the full the burdens of the struggle in which they are engaged; just as the British commonwealth of nations needs the effective cooperation of its every part, so we who are members of the government, with the great responsibilities we must bear at this time, are more conscious than we ever have been of the need for cooperation and help from hon. members in all parts of the house, and from none more than from the leader of the opposition and those who sit around him.

A few moments ago the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) mentioned that he and others might require