

*The Address—Mr. A. L. Smith*

kind of pure laziness. I have stubbornly refused to correct my remarks in *Hansard*, and I am more than happy that I was sufficiently lazy not to do that because these people have done it much better than I possibly could have done it myself.

I now turn to another group of people with whom we are associated, namely, the members of the press gallery. I can only say one thing to them, namely, to thank them for their fairness, even generosity, to me in the time that I have been here. I also want to thank the press of Canada for the kindly things they have said about me. As one member of my family remarked—I think it was my daughter—"It is a wonderful thing to have these obituaries while you are still alive." That is pretty much what has taken place.

I now turn—and this is my business here—to this institution of the House of Commons and its members. There is practically nothing I can say except to wish each of them the best of good luck in this world. My prayer is, particularly in view of the difficulties with which they are confronted at the moment, that they may have God's guidance in their deliberations here.

I said I was not going to preach, and I will not except perhaps to say one thing. I have been doing a lot of thinking lately because I have had lots of time to think. I said to myself: "You have been there a few years"—I am in the seventh year now—"What did you come out with? What is your idea of the chief function or responsibility of the House of Commons?" I enumerated in my mind all the virtues that a man could have or a nation could have. I came to a very simple conclusion, a conclusion that I know to be right, namely, that perhaps the chief thing that rests upon us here is that within these four walls and in our hands rest the honour and conscience of the Dominion of Canada. You may differ about material things, but no nation ever yet made any mark in history over any length of time unless it did so with honour. When it lost that it went down, as those men in Russia will go down because they are without honour.

I borrow from the poet and say this, and this is the only thing that anyone can describe as an attempt at eloquence. I do not like that word, but I remember this couplet so well with respect to the conscience and honour of Canada. I say to you: *Sirs, I charge you, keep it holy; keep it as a sacred thing. Without it everything we do will become dust and ashes even in our time.*

Now I must go. Mr. Speaker, sometime ago I came through the door behind us. I

know that I brought nothing with me. I think it was Omar Khayyam who said, as I shall say it in a moment:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument  
About it and about: but evermore  
Came out by the same door where in I went.

I am glad the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) is in his place. Omar Khayyam talked about doctor and saint. He said he heard great arguments. I have heard great arguments, but I have not seen many doctors or saints. I am inclined to think that in Omar's day he was not referring to medical doctors. He must have been referring to the fellows who in these days would be a Ph.D. or something like that. I remember so well when I was young thinking that I would go to Chicago university in order to try to get a Ph.D. and be called a doctor, because in those days the fact was that you could get a Ph.D. while the train passed through just as you can buy a bottle of Coca-Cola today. As a matter of fact times have changed.

But I have not seen many doctors, I have seen only one saint. I am inclined to think that I have seen altogether too much of him and that saint is St. Laurent, who sits opposite.

I have already said, sir, that I have brought nothing with me. Before continuing I think I should say to the house that I am far from being incapacitated. I want to take this opportunity of correcting the false impressions that are very much abroad in this country, namely, that members of parliament are down here for a rather well-to-do holiday. In my own town I meet people whom I know quite well and they say: "Oh, you are on a short holiday, are you?" I had not been in the House of Commons for a while, but they did not know it. That did not make any difference. They think we are having a holiday. If fourteen hours a day is a holiday, sir, then I do not grasp at all the simple meaning of the word.

I do not claim that I worked fourteen hours a day. Nobody can. But there is a pull on your mind and a single trackness about this business which it is difficult to bear. That was particularly true last session when we worked fourteen hours a day six days a week. So far as I am concerned that put the climax on my position. The doctors—not the kind I spoke about a moment ago—are very fond of using the word "hypertension" these days. What it means, I do not know—but I think it is the father and the mother of high blood pressure, or something like that.

That is the position in which I find myself. It is not that I cannot work: I have been forbidden to go through this routine which, apparently, is likely to last for some considerable length of time. I have been told