

Hon. George A. Drew

too severely from the recommendations of his medical advisers, to resume his activities in public life in Canada.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) said that he was speaking on behalf of all those around him, his colleagues. I can assure him that when he expressed sympathy to the official opposition on the absence from the house for the time being at least of the leader of the opposition he was speaking for all of us in this chamber irrespective of where we sit.

Mr. Drew's ill health is of course a personal tragedy involving as it does a man occupying his position and rendering the service that he rendered. While I have often disagreed with him, none the less I regarded him as a brilliant oppositionist, one who was able to go very often to the heart of a problem and to discuss it from the point of view of those who surrounded him. I know this must be a very serious blow to them.

May I also say that I am not unmindful of the part that Mrs. Drew has played in the public affairs of this country and the blow it must have been to her at this particular time when she has been a charming hostess and a personality who did much to enhance the position of the leader of the opposition throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, we regret the circumstance. I too join with the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in hoping that Mr. Drew will be restored to complete health and strength and that he will be able to continue his services in some form or other to the people of Canada for many years to come.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the acting leader of the Conservative party will, before he speaks, allow me to say that with what the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has said concerning the leader of the opposition and also with what the leader of the C.C.F. party has said we heartily agree. We should like to have it known that we feel extremely sorry that it has been necessary for Mr. Drew to consider stepping down from his responsible position, one that has taken a tremendous toll of his health and strength. As has rightly been said, we are also mindful of the position that Mrs. Drew has occupied and of the contribution she has made to the work that Mr. Drew has done.

Hon. W. Earl Rowe (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as has been said by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell) and by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, little need be added, as the Prime Minis-

[Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East).]

ter has spoken for all in the house. On behalf of the opposition I want to say that I appreciate the words of the Prime Minister and those of the members of the other parties who have spoken here today. Fortunately it seems to be one of the happy traditions of public life that there is an underlying sympathy with each other's problems. Mr. Drew and Mrs. Drew have given a great deal to the public life of Canada. No man could have been more devoted to duty. Since his early teens he has served this country in almost every capacity one could think of, including service overseas, municipal service, provincial premier and leader of the opposition in this house for some years. Despite the great apparent strength with which he was endowed by nature, as the years went by he seemed to put more into the service rather than what often appears to be less, as might be expected as we get into the twilight of our life.

Hon. George Drew had great energy and he devoted a great deal of it to the cause of public life in this country. I know that he and his wife will keenly appreciate the expressions of sympathy that have been voiced in this house by the Prime Minister and others, and I shall be glad to pass them on to them. I also join with the Prime Minister in hoping that Mr. Drew may be able to serve in other important capacities. I can also assure you, Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, that he is gaining his strength rapidly. He is looking well and, by all appearances, should soon be able to resume an important place in public life in Canada. I am sure his vast experience would fit him to discharge extremely important duties in the future. As the hon. member has said, I hope that he will for many years enjoy the strength to devote himself to public service as has always been his desire.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION LATER THIS DAY

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there are not only things that cause us real sadness that are happening but we have or we were to have the pleasure—we will have it at another moment—of the presence of a distinguished commonwealth colleague. When he is here I am sure we will all rejoice in his presence. By leave of the house, and seconded by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Howe), may I now move:

That the speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both houses of parliament be taken into consideration later this day.

Motion agreed to.