

Honourable gentlemen, as I speak, the world has barely emerged from the most dreadful conflict ever witnessed by man. In the countries directly affected by the war, we find nothing but ruin and havoc; famine and misery are rampant everywhere. Without the charitable help of the Americas, who knows if Europe, gripped by plague, might not for a while disintegrate into a vast expanse of desert where even the raven might not find its prey. When we recall that the world was engulfed in this calamity by the freakish will of but a few men, it is easily understood why humanity loathes dictatorships under whatever name or form they may occur. Thank Heaven our country was spared that scourge. Many of our families, however, mourn the loss of sons who died on the field of honour; many of our fighting men will return crippled and wounded, while countless others will come back home weakened by their long captivity in enemy camps, where they suffered from malnutrition and other hardships. To each one of them, we owe an imperishable debt of gratitude, for it is thanks to them that we still enjoy freedom, tranquillity and peace.

It is therefore our bounden duty to show ourselves worthy of their sacrifice. None of us, whoever we may be, must spare any effort, shrink at any hardship, to bestow on the survivors the opportunity of enjoying a better and happier life. It is therefore reassuring to find that the Government intends not only to promote peacetime initiative, but that during previous sessions it planned the needed steps by appropriate legislation. In order that the various projects might prove effective, it was essential, first of all, to ensure the maintenance of peace based on principles of justice and the respect of the individual. Jointly with the other United Nations, our Government, represented at the San Francisco Conference by a worthy delegation, took the necessary steps to attain that end.

It also invited the provincial governments to attend a conference, and submitted to them plans for organizing employment, equitably levying national income, and putting into effect a social security programme. I know that in trying to carry out this item of their platform, the members of the federal Cabinet will ever remember that they must respect the rights of the provinces and minorities.

I was delighted to see the Government propose the gradual repeal of war restrictions, while ensuring the control of inflation. I feel convinced, however, that, as soon as circumstances permit, Canadians will be able to exercise their rights freely.

Hon. Mr. DUPUIS.

(Text): Honourable senators know that I am now discussing that clause of the Speech from the Throne which states "that it is the intention of the Government to abolish war restrictions . . . without occasioning inflation or other economic disturbances." I am very hopeful that this will be approved by every honourable member, because the liberty of the citizen should be restored as soon as possible.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. DUPUIS: I am firmly convinced that this Government will not fail in its duty towards that end, and that each and every one of us will always have present in our minds the wise advice which Lord Macaulay gave, more than one hundred years ago, to British parliamentarians and government officials. Here is what he said:

Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the people by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties—by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment—by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law and by observing strict economy in every department of the state. Let the Government do this; the people will assuredly do the rest.

In the short time at my disposal, it is not possible for me to make a proper analysis of all the items contained in the Speech from the Throne. However, among the measures which will be submitted to Parliament, none is more important nationally, in my opinion, than the adoption of a distinctive flag. Indeed, a flag is a tangible sign which symbolizes the soul and the aspirations of a people. The soul of a nation, overflowing with hope, manifests itself in the actions of each one of us, and notwithstanding the diversity of our origins, our aspirations converge towards a common ideal: from Prince Edward Island to the island of Vancouver, every Canadian without exception, filled with justifiable national pride, wishes to gain for his country a reputation which would give it a foremost place among the nations of the world. It is therefore imperative that such aspirations, such pride, such national reputation should be symbolized by an outward sign. This sign and this emblem are lacking. Heretofore all kinds of flags have been flown: the Anglo-Saxons flew the Union Jack; the Irish, the golden harp on green background; Canadians of French descent, the Tricolour or the fleur-de-lis banner. Unfortunately, all these emblems tend to divide us instead of to unite us. They do not symbolize the common ideal of all Canadians. Praise be to our legislators! At last we shall have our own flag.