

Rt. Hon. Sir GEORGE FOSTER (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, moved, seconded by Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King (leader of the Opposition):

That Mr. Speaker do make grateful acknowledgement of the gracious message of His Majesty the King on behalf of the House of Commons.

He said, Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that I should say a few words on this occasion in reference to the message of His Majesty the King and the subject matter thereof.

We have been favoured at various times by having associated with the home of the Parliament of Canada different members of the Royal Family. This site of our Parliament buildings was chosen by our late beloved Queen Victoria. The corner stone of the old building was laid by her son, then the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VIII of England. The corner stone of this present building was laid by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, and that of the memorial tower by His Royal Highness, Edward, Prince of Wales. So that from the first days of Confederation down to the present time, the foundation and construction of our Parliament buildings have been connected with the Royal Family. Their interest in Canada has been exemplified by their active association with the home of the Canadian Parliament.

This occasion invites us to review some of the events of our history connected with our past Parliamentary homes and to indulge in some reminiscences. I may be pardoned, therefore, for saying a few words as to the past, as well as with regard to the present and to the future.

Our Parliamentary homes have been somewhat nomadic; and in that respect they have partaken of the character of our earlier period of exploration and development. To the British colonies in North America Parliamentary institutions came in due time. The old Parliaments of the Maritime Provinces early found their homes in the cities of Halifax, Charlottetown and Fredericton; and these homes have been maintained to the present time. The Parliaments of Upper and Lower Canada, when united, found their homes in various cities. The first meeting of the Parliament of United Canada was held at Kingston in the year 1841. Thence it was moved to Montreal in 1844. Fire drove the representatives of the people from their legislative home at Montreal and they betook themselves to Toronto. After Toronto

[Mr. Speaker.]

had sheltered the members of the Parliament of United Canada for about ten years, they found a home in the city of Quebec. After Queen Victoria's choice of Ottawa as the seat of the Federal Government and the building of the old edifice which was destroyed by fire in 1916, the Parliament of the United Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada met in Ottawa in 1867, and on November 6 of that year the first meeting of the Parliament of Canada was held in Ottawa. This brief sketch gives us an idea of the wanderings from place to place of our representatives, until at last they settled down in the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa in 1867. With the exception of a short interregnum after the fire of 1916, during which we found shelter in the Victoria Museum Building, we have since made our home here. And now, a few years after the fire of 1916, we occupy this noble and splendid edifice, which we hope will long continue to be the home of the Parliament of Canada.

May the record of Canada's legislators in their new home be as worthy of being embalmed in the history of our country as has been the record of those who have been connected with the Parliaments of the past.

We cannot help looking back to that day, the 6th of November, 1867, when the members and senators of the first Parliament of Canada crossed the threshold of their new home in Ottawa. I have often tried to sympathize with their state of mind, their hopes, their fears; none of us lived the lives that they lived; passed through the struggles which they passed through; earned the experience that they earned. It is impossible, therefore, for us fully to appreciate their feelings. At that time 181 members of Parliament and 72 members of the Senate crossed the threshold of their first national Parliamentary home. With what hopes; with what fears; with what pride in the record already made; with what uncertainty of feeling, yet with what strong hope in the future did these men—young, middle-aged, and old—commence their deliberations. Behind them were the struggles of long years of development, of organization, of the formation of municipal institutions, of bringing the country out of the rough and into a condition under which it could make greater and fuller progress, with all the struggle and contest and difficulty incidental thereto. In their hearts there was a new fire; on their faces a new light. They looked to a future vague and uncertain, yet full of strange and hidden potencies, flooded