

His Majesty the King

attendant physicians, surgeons and nurses, and to their respective professions, and to acknowledge with grateful hearts the beneficent Providence which, in answer to the prayers of a people, has guided their ministrations.

It will, I believe, be the wish of the Canadian people that, before entering upon our discussions, we, as their representatives, should give to His Majesty at the earliest possible moment some expression of our feelings at the promise of His Majesty's restoration to health and strength. If therefore it should meet with the convenience of hon. members opposite, and if the house will give its consent to waive the customary notice, I shall be pleased forthwith to move an address to His Majesty embodying the sentiments which we cherish in common. With the consent of the house I move the following resolution:

That it be resolved that an humble address be presented to His Majesty the King in the following words:

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty:
Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, humbly beg leave to approach Your Majesty with the expression of our thankfulness and rejoicing that, under the providence of God, there has been vouchsafed to Your Majesty the promise of complete recovery from the severe and protracted illness which Your Majesty has borne with so great patience and fortitude. We have watched the course of Your Majesty's illness with anxious solicitude and with profound sympathy for Your Majesty, Her Majesty the Queen, and for all the members of the Royal Family. It is with sentiments of the deepest sincerity and loyalty that, as representatives of the Canadian people, we join our prayers to those from all parts of the British Empire for the early restoration of Your Majesty to the fullness of health and strength.

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): This is an occasion on which those who sit to the left of the Speaker can associate themselves with the observations of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), not in his capacity as Prime Minister and chief of the government, but as leader of the House of Commons. And, the Prime Minister having spoken as leader of the house by virtue of his office, it only remains for me to say how heartily we agree, and how earnestly we associate ourselves, with every observation he has made.

The King of England has occupied, as the Prime Minister has so fittingly said, a very great place in the world. He came to the throne, as we know, rather unexpectedly and his life has been one of devotion to duty. No man in our time has given a greater example of earnest and sincere devotion to duty than

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

our king. It has been said of him by one of our great contemporary writers that our king asks nothing from any man which our king does not himself do. That, I think, fairly indicates the attitude of the sovereign during his reign. When he was stricken with illness it was because of his devotion to duty that he found himself in the condition in which he was; and one cannot but realize how great a position he has occupied in the constitutional life of our country when one observes what has transpired during the period of his illness.

I will not repeat what has been so well said, but I do associate myself with the observations of the Prime Minister as to the constitutional attitude of the sovereign with respect to every movement that has taken place to broaden, to expand and to extend the constitutional liberties of his people during his reign. We in this country are well aware just what that means.

It has been said by some that the sovereign plays but little part in the administration of the affairs of government. Those who know intimately the history of our times know that this is not quite accurate; the sovereign has played an ever-increasing rather than a diminishing part in the life of the country. His wisdom, his detachment, his impartiality have enabled him to speak with his ministers with an authority, and to give an assistance and advice, which could come, in the very nature of things, from no other source. The Canadian people have peculiar reasons to rejoice that one who knew their country so well and who has, with fortitude and patience, borne so serious an illness is now on the threshold, we trust, of permanent recovery. No calamity could be greater to the empire or to this Dominion than that the illness of the sovereign should have a fatal termination; and if there is one people that has reason to rejoice more than another it is the Canadian people—the people who inhabit this great Dominion. We are all agreed on that.

I desire to associate myself with what has been said by the Prime Minister with respect to the men of science who against great odds battled for the life of their patient. I suppose that the victory of science over death has never been more marked than in the case of the illness of our sovereign. All that experience could teach, all that research had made known to younger men, was made available, and the result has been a striking tribute to the ability of science to grapple with the powers of death in a manner never before known.

And there is one other to whom, I think, our hearts at this moment go out, one who,