

*The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King*

ment at an early date something in the way of a revision of the rules which will help to shorten the discussion. I am not going into the various points my hon. friend raised this afternoon. Many of them have been raised over and over again in this parliament for years by others who have had just as high motives as those of the leader of the opposition in the proposals they have made. But this House of Commons is a big institution; it is the master of its own house. It is not the government that is responsible for the rules and much of the procedure; it is the house as a whole.

In connection with proper procedure may I say to my hon. friend that I believe the one thing above all others which will help is that we recognize there is an appropriate time for everything. With all due respect may I say that to-day my hon. friend tried to cover nearly every subject that is likely to be discussed in the course of the present session. That is a pretty big order; it has taken a good deal of time. He has spoken on employment, on housing, on repatriation, on the loan to Britain, on credits; he has made a budget speech as well as a speech on the address. Not only that—he concluded with a lengthy speech on foreign policy. May I suggest that if he wants to improve the procedure of the house from now on he select one topic at a time, limit the number and not try to cover everything in the course of the debate on the address.

Mr. BRACKEN: Would you confine the leader of the opposition to one topic on the speech from the throne?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Oh, by no means; as my hon. friend rightly said, the speech from the throne affords an opportunity to discuss anything. But I should have thought in the light of the amendment he has proposed what my hon. friend would have done would have been to make one general blast; that he would have come out and said in one short denunciation that everything the government had done was wrong, and that as a matter of fact they had failed to do anything. He could have greatly shortened his speech if he had just put it into those few words, but he lost the effect such a statement might have had by first of all running through a long list of topics and trying to exhaust all that he could say on every single one.

However, my hon. friend failed to point out to the house that while employment may not be all that we would wish it to be; while housing may not be all that we would wish it to be; while repatriation may not be all that we would wish it to be, and so on in

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regard to all these and the other subjects he has mentioned, nevertheless, Canada is to-day in a better position than any other country in the world. When one hears from all the countries that are really struggling with their problems to-day, whether it is the United States, whether it is the United Kingdom, whether it is Belgium or Holland or the other countries of Europe or other dominions that were involved in this great war—I am not referring to enemy countries because we know they are all destroyed—from every one of these countries comes word, "We wish we could be like Canada. We wish we were in the position Canada is in." No other country in the world stands as high in the eyes of the world as Canada stands to-day, and I think it an unfortunate thing that the one view to the contrary should be expressed in this House of Commons by one of our own Canadian citizens, the leader of one of our political parties. That is the corrective I want to make this afternoon to what my hon. friend has said. As far as employment is concerned there is not, in any other country in the world, as large a percentage of men employed as there is in Canada at this time; nor is there, may I point out, another country in which there has been as little in the way of industrial strife. That is a very important thing. It has not been a matter of chance. It has been a matter of the policies of this administration over many years and, may I say, it has been due in very special measure to the exceptional ability of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) of this government in adjusting labour relations. That is something to be proud of, something this country can, I will not say boast about, but at least feel a tremendous satisfaction in, namely that we have had such a record of comparative industrial peace since V-J day.

In regard to rehabilitation, my hon. friend knows that as far as the return of our forces from overseas is concerned we stand very much in the lead in the numbers that have been successfully repatriated. Certainly we have not been able to meet the situation in its entirety, but what country has, not only at this time but at any time? What is needed it seems to me is a proper sense of proportion in these matters. In regard to housing the speech from the throne mentions quite clearly that the demand is in excess of the supply; but here again I ask, in what other country, relatively speaking, is there a larger proportion of houses available than in this country?

An hon. MEMBER: Oh, go on.