

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are met to-day under the shadow of the tragedy of the greatest war in history. When we left here in August last we were conscious that the battle of Britain, possibly the invasion of Britain, was in the immediate future, and we watched the developments from day to day with the greatest possible anxiety. Now we are happy to think that the invasion of Britain did not take place, but we are equally certain that the battle of Britain is not yet over.

I think at this point I should say a word or two with respect to the question of the summoning of parliament at this time. There was considerable discussion in the newspapers with respect to what took place between my right hon. friend and myself on October 3. I must confess to you, sir, and to the house that, obsessed as I was during that intervening period with what was occurring in connection with the invasion of Britain and the battle of Britain, I did not conceive that it was immediately necessary that parliament should reassemble. Having received an invitation to visit my right hon. friend and discuss the question; having approached that discussion with those considerations in mind, and the right hon. gentleman having already intimated that the government had no legislation ready, I concurred in the suggestion which was then made. I have nothing to take back with regard to that decision; nor do I think my right hon. friend has anything to take back. Nevertheless, in view of statements which were made in the press and in view of statements by my hon. friend to my left (Mr. Coldwell), I did suggest to the Prime Minister that it should not be said that he or I should be taken in any sense as having arranged in advance that there should not be public discussion in this house; and we are here for that purpose.

Since we adjourned we have had four by-elections in Canada, which returned the four very fine, estimable gentlemen who were introduced to you last week, sir, and who took their places on the floor of this house. I am indeed proud to have our party strengthened by the addition of two young men, for whom I predict a great future as members of this House of Commons. My right hon. friend has received an accretion to his ministry in the person of an hon. gentleman of whom I spoke once before in, shall I say, friendly terms. To-day I am glad to add my welcome to him as he takes his place here and participates in the business of this house. Macdonald! What a name to conjure with. And Macdonald of Kings-

[Mr. Ralston.]

ton! How that takes our memories back seventy-five years; yet what a difference we see. After all:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose,  
By any other name would smell as sweet.

Yet one of the greatest assets of the hon. gentleman is his name.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I say that with the utmost good spirit; I do not understand the laughter. The name of Macdonald is an asset on the floor of this parliament. It is a name which I hope will never die, and my hon. friend now is called upon to hold that name high, as I am sure he will. Yet when I pause to reflect that the hon. gentleman represents the city of Kingston and that he comes from my neighbouring province of Nova Scotia, my mind goes back to the election of 1935, in which I was a participant. I recall the announcement made by this hon. gentleman as he began to assault the citadels of protection in the province of Ontario. And he did assault them; the results speak for themselves. Yet to-day he is sitting as the representative of one of those citadels of protection, supporting a government that maintains around this country a tariff wall higher than ever obtained in the history of this country; and he sits for what is often called the "Derry" of Canada. May I say to my hon. friend that I hope he will enjoy his position, because I venture to prophesy, as his right hon. leader once did about me, that he will not occupy it very long.

I wish now to turn to the speech from the throne. The right hon. Prime Minister has put in the mouth of his excellency what I suppose is the shortest speech in the history of this parliament. It has the merit of brevity, but it falls short in everything else by which we measure what a speech from the throne should be. In this speech there is not the slightest intimation of what the government's programme is, save and except that it will report to this parliament. Are we to believe that in summoning this, the second session of this parliament, the government has no programme of legislation, nothing for parliament to do but meet and discuss? That is probably the truth. During the latter part of last session and during the three intervening months this government lulled the people of Canada to sleep in the belief that we are living in the best of all possible worlds. In effect we were told that we needed no direction, and none is given in the speech from the throne. It is true we are promised that opportunity will be afforded—

for the fullest consideration and discussion of Canada's war effort and of national problems which war has served to intensify or create.