

particularly our appreciation of the fact that the great body of these intricate questions have been left, as they have been left ever since Canada was formed, to the consideration of the governments of the respective dominions when particular events arise demanding discussion and decision. And I think, in spite of the concession of this "great charter," we will go on and preserve the unity of the empire chiefly by dealing with events only as they arise, after consultation, with goodwill, being ever anxious to conciliate and adopt so far as we can the views of other sister dominions and of Great Britain herself, all to the end of preserving the unity of the British Empire, upon which the peace of this world for years to come must so largely depend.

Mr. ROBERT GARDINER (Acadia): Before I discuss the speech from the throne I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being re-elected to the chair. I am quite sure that with your past experience you will be able to perform your duties with dignity and impartiality, and I have no doubt that all hon. gentlemen will join in wishing you every success in your office. I desire also to congratulate the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) on the position to which he has been elevated. We realize, of course, that he now holds a very important position and an onerous one. I listened to him yesterday with a good deal of satisfaction in that his address was most modest in its tone, and because of that fact he is perhaps an improvement upon leaders recently occupying the position in this House. I had not the privilege of hearing the mover and seconder of the address and so I am unable at the moment to compliment them upon their efforts, but I trust that I shall have ample time to read the report of their remarks and later on to congratulate them personally. I have been told that they made splendid presentations and I shall certainly take occasion in due course to offer them congratulations.

Two of the most important addresses in this House have concerned themselves more particularly with the conference recently held in London. I understand that time will be afforded the House to discuss later on the results of that conference, and therefore I do not propose to inflict upon hon. members at this time any remarks in that regard except to observe incidentally that I trust, as no doubt other hon. members do, that the efforts of our delegates representing Canada and this House at the conference have been successful.

[Mr. Cahan.]

It has been customary since I have been a member of this House to discuss election results on the meeting of a new parliament. For some peculiar reason nothing has been said up to the present moment in regard to the recent election. Everyone remembers no doubt the situation that developed during the last session. A special committee was appointed to inquire into the conduct of the Department of Customs and Excise. This committee divulged certain facts which were taken into consideration by the House, and our Conservative friends when parliament dissolved felt they had a sure election cry. They expected to come back in sufficient numbers to control the government. This has not happened. Why? We cannot for a moment suppose that the people of Canada did not take into account the revelations that were made by the committee; we cannot help assuming that these disclosures were considered. There must therefore have been something besides the report of the Customs committee which the people took into consideration when they cast their ballots at the last general election. I have discussed the question with many people in many walks of life, and I can say quite emphatically that, generally speaking, the people were influenced more by the legislative program of the last session and by the budget which was brought down than they were by the results of the Customs inquiry. That program and that budget had, in my opinion, more to do with the outcome of the election than had the inquiry. On many occasions I have listened to members of this House referring to the great leaders of the two old parties in the past. We have all heard hon. gentlemen declaring their acceptance of the principles laid down by Sir John A. Macdonald or Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as the case might be. I have often been astonished that men with any intelligence should speak in that manner of the political leaders of the two old parties in decades gone by. No doubt these were great men and they had great problems to face. But let us remember that those problems were incident to that day and the problems of that time are not the problems of our generation. Consequently any government that wishes to remain in power in this country for any length of time will have to apply itself to present problems rather than lean upon its predecessors.

Coming to the speech from the throne, it seems to me that in some particulars it is very indefinite; I will mention the points as I go along. However, taking it as a whole, I may congratulate the government upon the general content of the speech. We view with a great deal of pleasure the fact that the gov-