

## GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech of His Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

Right Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Mr. Speaker, the speech which was placed in the mouth of His Excellency the Governor General by his advisers is one of unusual length. It deals with many subjects old and new, chiefly old. With both we are already familiar, and if some are new to the House they are not new to the public; they have been discussed again and again, and upon them the public is now awaiting the decision of the Government. Therefore we may well pass these subjects over awaiting the opportunity when the Government will place them before the House in concrete form for adjudication.

In the address to which we listened yesterday there is no mention of a subject which does not require any legislation and in which the public is much interested—that is to say, that since Parliament prorogued in the month of September last there has been quite a change in the Government. If you will permit me, I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to my expression. I did not say “change of Government,” I said “change in the Government.” My hon. friend from Toronto (Mr. Mowat) yesterday, in referring casually to this in his speech, made a distinction between the old and the new Government. There is no new Government; we have the same Government that has existed for the last six years—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: And so long as there is no change in the Premiership it is a continuation of the same administration.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: There is the same control, the same principles and the same everything in connection therewith. I emphasize that there is the same control and the same principles. There is a change, I must admit, in the complexion of the Government, and if I may say so it is not only a change but an improvement.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: As we look at the Government from this side of the House we cannot fail to notice that it is characterized by a healthier complexion

than it wore last session. There is not about it the same pallor that existed then. Although not a follower of the Government, I am glad to say that the present Administration displays a rosy red colour which is at all events pleasing to the eye. Last summer the friends of the Government were much concerned as to its condition. Many of them, perhaps I should say all of them, believed that unless there was a copious draft of rich red blood injected into its system, things might go hard with them. This condition necessitated a surgical operation. Such operations have been very much resorted to of late, especially since the war began. Many have been the instances where healthy, strong men came forward and presented their bare arms to the surgeon in order to have a vein opened in the last desperate attempt to save a moribund life.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: The records do not always show that the operation was successful. Indeed it so happens that in many instances the patient was so far gone that he could not be saved except by the sacrifice of another's blood, and sometimes the sacrifice was fatal even to the saviour who offered his blood for transfusion.

Let me say at once that to these Liberal members who joined the Administration, I do not wish such a fate. With most of them it was my privilege for many years to be closely associated in intimate friendship. I know them too well not to realize that in what they did they were guided by wholly conscientious motives. Indeed we have the declaration of some of them that it was a sacrifice; indeed there is the written statement of others that they for a long time hesitated and resisted all advances. Conscience is the supreme arbiter, and into the sanctity of conscience I will not enter. I respect the convictions of everybody, even of those with whom for the time being I may differ; but I may be pardoned if I say that so far as I am concerned I never could appreciate those many subtle disquisitions made in the effort to convince us that war necessitates and creates new standards of duty. There is no such thing as new standards of duty in war. Duty is only the concrete expression of eternal truth which never can vary; which remain the same in war as in peace. But war undoubtedly intensifies all duties and lifts them up to an