

the house at this time of war, at the opening of the session, using the words which they addressed to all who were here assembled. My hon. friends were right when they said that their selection was not a compliment merely to themselves, though it might well have been so merited, nor merely a compliment to their constituencies, which they were kind enough to suggest that it also might have been, but that it was first and foremost intended as a recognition of the service the armed forces of our country are rendering to Canada and the cause of freedom to-day. Not only that, it was also a recognition of the number of the members of the house who to-day are serving in the armed forces of Canada. We may all be proud that so large a percentage of the membership of this house is composed of men on active service at the present time.

What I felt most about the speeches of my hon. friends was that each brought us very close to the armed forces and to the services which they are rendering. One hon. member had just returned from England; both are going overseas very shortly. Their addresses brought home to all of us, I think, in a more intimate way than would otherwise have been possible, the magnitude and the perils of war and the service being rendered not to our country only but to the world through Canada's war effort at this time.

Their speeches also, I felt, helped to remind us of the unity which our country has happily preserved through these trying times. Each of these speakers spoke wholly irrespective of the province from which he came, wholly irrespective of the race from which he is descended, wholly irrespective of his own native tongue. They spoke solely as Canadians, and in speaking as Canadians, they reminded us of the spirit which underlies the service of our men abroad, and which was so well expressed by Abbé Sabourin when, in giving an account of the spirit with which the men who served at Dieppe entered upon that great reconnaissance, he said, "We went there not thinking of our faith, not thinking of our tongue, or of tradition; we went there thinking of Canada, our country which we were seeking to defend, and the cause of freedom which we were championing at that time."

Members on all sides of the house will rejoice that that spirit of Canadian unity underlying the services which are being rendered at this time has been made so manifest and clear in the first speeches that have been delivered in this house.

There was one other thought that came to my mind as both hon. members spoke. It was what they felt service in the armed forces had

afforded members of those services in terms of a wider outlook. It was apparent from their remarks that, in their opinion, service in the armed forces had an effect upon all who had enlisted, in enlarging their outlook, in giving them a greater appreciation of common human needs and, in association with that, an enlargement of the expectation of what should await them when the war is over. In other words, they made clear to us that, while they are fighting at the front to help to preserve our country and our freedom, they have a right to expect that those in this parliament, those who remain behind in this country, will so conduct its affairs that when they return to Canada they will find a better condition awaiting them than has been possible heretofore at any time. Both have given us in their addresses the keynote for the discussion which we should have in this parliament during the session. If we can follow the example which they have set of avoiding recriminations, of stressing the real significance of this war and also the importance of the post-war period; if we confine our discussions along those lines, our service will be one which will long be remembered and appreciated by the country.

My hon. friend the leader of the opposition began and concluded his own remarks by reference to ideals in public life, and maintaining the prestige of parliament. May I say that with all that he said of that as an objective I am in most hearty accord. I think I can say in the presence of all who are here that in the twenty-seven years I have been a member of this parliament I have from the beginning sought, so far as it lay within my power, to maintain the highest traditions with respect to parliament and its proceedings. I think that, in the years when I was the leader of the opposition, some seven in all, and in the years I have been leader of the government, now nearly sixteen, I have throughout done the best I possibly could to maintain a high tradition with respect to public life, both within the halls of parliament, and on the platform in the country.

Perhaps my hon. friend while making that appeal did not altogether consider that in some ways it might have seemed to be a reflection upon the members of this house. The other day my hon. friend the former leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) spoke of his effort to maintain high traditions in debate and decorum in the house, and I said I thought he had succeeded in setting a good example in that respect, although all of us, as my hon. friend said, are liable at moments to slip a little. But I do maintain that if