

*The Official Opposition*

government of this country and to the national effort during this trying time of crisis, I shall feel amply repaid. I unbosomed my soul to the members of this house on May 16, 1940, when I said that in accepting this position even temporarily I did not intend to engage in a day-to-day dog-fight over political subject matters. I have tried to keep to that path. How far I have succeeded in aiding the government in its war effort, in a constructive manner, and at the same time tempered by criticism which may have been sharp at times, I shall leave you to judge.

I should like to extend my personal thanks to the members of this house and to you, sir, for the courtesy which has been extended to me at all times. One of the efforts which I made was to maintain and, if possible, to enhance the dignity of parliament. Parliament is a great institution and, if it is allowed to degenerate, it will but deserve the condemnation of the people who have sent us here. It is one of the fundamental duties of members, and those of us who are entrusted for the time being with the responsibility of leadership, to make parliament not only the vital thing it ought to be, but an institution which will command the respect of the whole country. That is one of the very bases of our democratic institutions, and I hope, indeed I am sure, that my worthy and able young successor will make that one of his main objectives.

I am not here to-day to pronounce any swan-song. I am not leaving the precincts of this house. But I felt that I could not carry on the responsibilities of leadership of the opposition for any further period. I hope to make some contribution to the discussions and to the work of the committees of the house as long as I am a member. In leaving the official position which I have held I trust I shall carry with me the respect and friendship of every individual member of this house, and I shall value that more than the applause of the multitude.

I have lived now a fairly long life. I have had my full share of the ups and downs of public life and of political battle, and I may say to you, sir, that in the declining years of my life the thing that I crave most is the respect and regard of my fellow citizens, which I have had in such full measure from the people who sent me here. I thank you.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my first word as leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition in the House of Commons perhaps should be a word of appreciation of the help and guidance

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

that my predecessor, whom you have just honoured by expressions of appreciation, has given me from time to time. I share fully the sentiments which have been voiced in that regard this afternoon. I am perhaps not able to express them as well as some who have spoken before me; but from the bottom of my heart I say to the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) who retired yesterday from the onerous duties of the office of leader of the opposition, that I join in the hope that he may be spared to enjoy a long and happy life as a private member of this house—at least until such time, if I may say so to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) without discouraging him—until such time in the very near future as we on this side of the house shall form the government.

At this time of course I did not intend to enter into any matters of controversy. But the Prime Minister was of a somewhat different mind, and for that reason I want to express one or two opinions before I proceed to what in the first instance I had intended to say.

The Prime Minister has a great and natural charm in dealing with young men like myself. I fancy that I should be careful and beware of the blandishments of the Prime Minister, lest I fall into some trap, which I know he would not purposely lay for me. But let me say this to the Prime Minister, with the courtesy that I learn from him—because of that he is a master. He spoke about the absence from the house of leaders of the opposition who are really leaders, as compared to acting leaders such as I—temporary leaders, if you like. Well, even those of us who are rather young can remember the days when the present Prime Minister was himself in similar situations. I remember very well, when I was younger and perhaps more impressionable than I am now, feeling that on two occasions at least the position in which the present Prime Minister found himself was a very difficult one. Sir, I take heart from what the Prime Minister has said this afternoon with respect to our outside leadership and inside leadership more perhaps than from anything else he could have said; because if we have the same success with ours that he had with his, I warn him to beware in the years to come.

The Prime Minister made some complaint about the custom or practice that had grown up. I take it he saw the growth of that practice beginning in the South York election. There are those in the country—certainly I would not want to subscribe to this view myself—who then felt that at that time the