

and even to vote against if I deem it desirable. It is an unfortunate circumstance in our parliamentary procedure that when the speech from the throne or the budget is before the House we must vote either for or against it as a whole. We all know that in either the speech from the throne or the budget there are some items that every member of the House can support, and it places such members in a very unpleasant position when they find that they must either vote in support of or against the budget or the speech from the throne, as the case may be, as a whole. We give warning to the House that we are going to take a different course. If we find there is more good than evil in the speech from the throne or in the budget, then we will support either, reserving to ourselves the right to speak or vote against anything therein contained which we think is wrong. That is the attitude we purpose to take, and I trust the House will accept this declaration in the same spirit in which it is made.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister yesterday referred to the endorsement the government had received in the recent elections. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that our little group here in this corner can boast what no other group can, that we came back fifty per cent stronger—we have one member more.

Last session, owing to the fact that this side of the House was very much crowded, we took our places on the government side, stating to the House that there was no particular political significance in our change, but that there we could hear and be heard to greater advantage. This session, since there are no cross benches and there is more room on this side of the House, we are back on what is termed the "opposition" side with a number of the farmer members, with whom during the past five years we have found ourselves working in very close co-operation. But let me say that we, like the hon. members around us, do not regard ourselves as necessarily being opposed to the government; we rather would emphasize the fact that we are trying as best we may under the existing rules of the House to maintain an independent position. We are thinking in terms of legislation rather than in terms of party. We propose to support to the best of our ability good legislation from whatever source it comes, but we do not propose to give unqualified allegiance to any party irrespective of their legislative programme or of their administrative efficiency.

The desire has been expressed that we ought to expedite the business of the House, and we in our corner here have every disposition to do so. However, I feel we have a perfect right, even during the few days we are here, to discuss various matters which come before us in the speech from the throne. I might call attention to the fact that two whole days were devoted to formal functions. Surely two or three days may be devoted to a discussion of the business of the country. There is indeed some little danger that we in Ottawa may forget the real business for which we come here. I notice the newspapers announce that we are in for a brilliant social season. In connection with the coming of the Governor General the newspapers of the country sent out a despatch to the effect that Ottawa society was agog over the prospects of a social season of luncheons, dinners, teas and dances. That may be all very well for a few members here, but I would suggest that it does not particularly appeal to the large mass of the electors, our fellow citizens, who sent us here and who are living in the industrial areas or on the prairies of the west.

Our group may be small, but I venture to say that it represents a very considerable proportion of the people across the country who otherwise are not vocal. The point of view of the Labour party is somewhat different from that of the older groups and even from that of the farmers with whom we co-operate. It is true, I know, that some of the members of the older parties claim to represent labour, inasmuch as there are labour people in their constituencies. I do not at all object to their efforts to represent labour, but it is not very frequently that they press what are essentially the principles of organized labour. There are in my constituency in Winnipeg North Centre bankers who probably would agree with me in the statement that I have not during the past five years tried to represent in the House their special point of view. In the same way there are a great many members here in whose constituencies there are labour men and who represent in a general way the views current in their different communities. But these members do not come to give distinct expression to the view-point of labour in their constituencies. It is therefore our peculiar task and duty to attempt to represent labour as best we may. Sometimes I fancy it must be quite pleasant to represent a constituency composed very largely of bankers or wholesalers or manufacturers. In such a case even I might wax eloquent over the "increased prosperity of the country" and indulge in other phrases of that character. However, some of us, if we are to be true to the people who sent