

The Address—Mr. Pinard

take charge of the opposition, could not but leave him quite cold, or at least very skeptical.

In the case of the Liberal party the election of our new leader, the present Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) coincided with the retirement from leadership of one whom, I am sure, the history of this country will confirm as having been one of Canada's greatest servants and statesmen, the right hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. Mackenzie King). The people of the country and everyone in the house were pleased to realize that our former Prime Minister had chosen to remain with us as a simple commoner in order to give the country the benefit of his long and unique experience, not only in Canadian but in world affairs. It is indeed comforting to see that the former leader of the opposition, the hon. member for Neepawa (Mr. Bracken), has also decided to remain with us. He too has made a great contribution, and fortunately the house will continue to benefit from his experience. Such an attitude on the part of the former leaders of our two great political groups, in deciding to remain in the service of their country in this house, offers a much better example than that which was given some time ago by another leader of a political party. I refer, of course, to the late Lord Bennett, who was Prime Minister of Canada for five long years.

The leader of the Conservative party at that time launched before the public in the 1935 election his famous slogan "Canada first", which he defended with his usual emphasis. After suffering a crushing defeat in 1935, a defeat which we all remember, he decided to leave his country of birth and origin, which had bestowed upon him such great honours, and he went overseas to England. He changed his slogan, "Canada first", into the strange declaration, "I am going home."

It is doubtful, however, whether the present leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) will follow such an example after he has experienced the same political adversities. Even if he decided to go back to the province of Ontario in order to become again premier of that province, it is possible that the electors would not accept his change of decision. Then the leader of the opposition would be left with the possibility of offering his services to the premier of Quebec as a friend unless, of course, the latter has then disappeared from public life.

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): He would not accept it.

Mr. Pinard: Or possibly, as my friend says, the offer would be refused because the Quebec premier would try to find better political

[Mr. Pinard.]

advice. Let us return for a moment to that great event of last August when a new leader was chosen to take over the direction of the Liberal party. On that occasion once more the people of Canada understood the two main reasons that are behind the continued success of our political group. Those reasons are competent leadership and sound national policy. Ever since its inception, the Liberal party has indeed enjoyed competent leadership. I think everyone in the house, even my friends opposite, will agree that it is not necessary for me to demonstrate that fact. No better and more decisive proof could be brought than that of simply recalling that ever since the end of the last century, or if you prefer since the advent of Laurier in 1896, the Liberal party has been in power all the time with the exception of the decade from 1911 to 1921, and the sad period that I recalled a minute ago, from 1930 to 1935.

What better demonstration is there of the brilliant leadership which our group, and I would also say the Canadian people, have enjoyed under Laurier and the right hon. member for Glengarry? On the 7th of August last Liberals from all parts of Canada elected their new leader, the present Prime Minister of our country. Since that date the Canadian people have once more realized how fortunate indeed our group has been that there should be a man so highly distinguished, of so great ability, to carry the emblem of Liberalism and follow the path traced out by these great figures who shine in the history of our nation.

The prodigious ascension of the Prime Minister to the highest political honours is a tribute paid by the Canadian people to his sincerity, competence and ability. The fact of his choice by all Liberals throughout the whole country is also proof of the spirit of unity and good understanding which has always prevailed in our political group. This gesture in selecting once again a Canadian of French origin is another recognition by Liberals of the fundamental principle of equality of the two major races of the nation. It is one of the numerous reasons which justify the contentions of our group, that it really represents the aspirations, ideals and thoughts of everybody in Canada, and justify its claim to being a truly national party.

But, Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago that not only good leadership but also a sound national policy throughout has been one of the reasons for the continued achievement of our political group in the past. A great French statesman once said that politics should be a fight for ideas rather than a struggle of intrigues. Unless a party is willing to base its political actions on intangible principles; unless it chooses to remain faithful to a living