

is faulty and improving what is good. No more futile opposition, opposition of words and purely of a political nature. In the exceptionally peculiar circumstances that we are going through, in the face of these proposed reforms which the whole country has welcomed with joy and enthusiasm, and which are after all the logical sequence and like the completion of the government's achievements during the last five years, under the authority of a leader whose superior intelligence and courage all independent minds are pleased to acknowledge, we must necessarily work in unison, leave aside our respective prejudices, gather together in one alliance all the men of good will in the country.

It was to the men of good will that He who was bringing to mankind a cure for its miseries was addressing His message, twenty centuries ago. He came to revise the great truths of the Decalogue, which had been too long forgotten, as in our time. They were however, just as they are to-day, the only expressions of social justice, the only ones capable of reviving in this world the thoughts of peace, justice and charity.

Let us hope that we may honour again these prescriptions and recover these fundamental notions with their full christian meaning. Let us hope that we may contrive that the community recover its balance, that the state make use of its rights with regards to the rich and poor alike, that it be more and more the champion of the weak, of the common people, of the oppressed, the arbiter of uneven battles between the oppressor and his victims, the stern guardian or order against the forces of disorder. Let us hope that we may come back to the notion of a really humane capitalism, that shares in the moral virtues of thrift and loss, and will drive into contempt all these enterprises which persist in acting contrary to the dictates of justice.

And it is because I am confident that the reforms proposed in the speech from the throne are based upon these principles and calculated to bring happiness to our Canadian homes, that I have the honour, Mr. Speaker, of seconding the address of the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is customary for the leader of the opposition, when he follows the mover and seconder of the address to extend his cordial congratulations to the hon. members upon the manner in which they have discharged their duties. This custom, like all other customs of parliament, has its foundation in a substantial reason. It

[Mr. Dorion.]

is the rule, where the government can find it possible so to do, to ask newly elected members of the House of Commons to move and second the address, and this gives to the leader of the opposition the privilege of being the first to extend to political opponents his congratulations upon the manner in which each has delivered his maiden speech. Well, the fact is that, since parliament last assembled, we have had five by-elections, and as hon. gentlemen opposite know only too well, there is but one member out of the five who has been returned to the house who now occupies a seat on the government benches. The fact that this new member has not been asked to be one of the number either to move or second the address to my mind rather suggests that perhaps his speech would not be as welcome to the government as that of the gentlemen who have been selected for this purpose.

I might further draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to another fact, and that is that apart from the five vacancies which have been filled, this house meets to-day with four vacancies in its membership. They are vacancies in the constituencies of Halifax; St. Denis, Montreal; East Algoma, in Ontario; and Long Lake in Saskatchewan. There are, as I say, these four vacancies. Why is it that we have not had some newly elected member of the house from one or other of these constituencies to move and second the address? There are two possible reasons. One is that up to the present time the government has not seen fit to bring on by-elections to fill those vacancies, and the reason the government has not brought on those by-elections is that it feared that if they were brought on the results would be what they were in the last five by-elections. In other words, the government has lost confidence in itself, and lost so much confidence in the support it is likely to receive in the country that it would not venture even to bring on by-elections to fill vacancies that occurred—two of them in the month of September last, one of them on the first of October last, and the recent one on January the first. With respect to the last mentioned it would not be expected that that vacancy would be filled by this time, but with respect to the other three there can be no justifiable reason or excuse why this House of Commons should assemble for another session without its representation being as full and complete as it is possible for the government to make it. Had there been members returned from those constituencies I have no doubt the government would still have had to go to the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe) and the