

*The Address—Mr. Bourgeois*

French lady happens to be "Our Dame" at Rideau Hall. Is that not a reason for us to marvel in seeing how history repeats itself? We know that in the Ursulines' chapel in Quebec, where a cannon ball dug the grave of the Marquis de Montcalm, there stands in front of the statue of the Virgin a lamp which for ever burns. Must not the flame of this lamp of remembrance, kept up by pious hands, have burned more brilliantly when there arrived amongst us this noble French lady, born of the same race as the glorious vanquished of 1759, and whom destiny has chosen to be Vice-Queen of the country ruled in the past by those great patriots. I am led to believe that if this proud but dauntless Louis de Buade, Count de Frontenac, returned to this soil of ours, he would unfurl over the Quebec citadel the old fleur-de-lis flag and once more would welcome through the mouth-piece of his canons the Baroness Roberte de Neufville and the Earl of Bessborough, his successor as Governor of New France, now the Dominion of Canada.

While this world-wide economic crisis through which we are passing lasts, it is my earnest belief that we should appreciate the serious and effective endeavours put forth by the government which presides to-day over the destinies of the country, endeavours which have already given precious results and which give rise for the future to greater hopes. It is this reassuring situation that the speech from the throne justly points out with reason, and it is also the unequivocal message which I bring to the government on behalf of the people of Three Rivers-St. Maurice.

I have the honour, sir, of representing, I am proud to say, one of the most important ridings which appears on the electoral map; important owing to its history which dates back to the glorious outset of the colony, important owing to the large number of its present rural and city population, in majority French Canadians, however, there is also a large number of English, Irish and Scandinavians; equally important also is the county of Three Rivers-St. Maurice owing to its vast natural resources, especially its forests and water powers, as well as its numerous industries that have been established there. One can easily understand what interest would be taken in the by-election, last summer, under such conditions and circumstances. Besides, the government having been in power for hardly a year, had to deal with problems and difficulties almost insurmountable. In the course of the special session, in September, 1930, as well as during the regular session of 1931, which was then on the eve of closing,

[Mr. Bourgeois.]

our opponents had been relentless in their criticism, contending that the government had sadly failed to redeem its pledges, that the alarming state of the country far from improving, had on the contrary grown worse. I well remember, at that time, having read with much interest, the speeches of those who later on were to become my colleagues on the opposite benches. "You have betrayed," they said, "the trust which the people of this country reposed in you, especially that of the electors of Quebec." If we could have foreseen then, they further added, what is taking place to-day, if you had brought forth on the public hustings the budget which was adopted at that session of 1931, if the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) had stated that his intention was to increase the sales tax, to put a further duty on imports, raise the rate of postage, etc., etc., it is with stones that he would have been chased from public meetings.

The opportunity was given to our opponents to come forward and repeat on the public hustings, before the electorate of Three Rivers, what they had stated with so much apparent conviction on the floor of this house. During three weeks we had to undergo a formidable assault by our friends in the opposition, and this, in a Liberal riding, in a Liberal stronghold considered to be impregnable, in a county which twelve months previous had renewed its trust in favour of a Liberal candidate by giving him a majority of almost 4,000 votes, a constituency which had not once elected a Conservative representative since 1896, when Sir Adolph P. Caron was elected to succeed Sir Hector Langevin, two men who have left lasting names in Canadian politics. The people of the county of Three Rivers-St. Maurice turned a deaf ear to the appeals, prejudices and untimely criticisms of our friends in the opposition. They reposed their trust in a government of worthy men who, having solely the best interests of this country at heart and simply wishing to relieve the anxiety of the people in the economic crisis which is persisting, made a supreme effort so as to strengthen our finances through a tariff policy truly Canadian and thereby reestablish the administration of the affairs of Canada on a solid foundation.

The constituency of Three Rivers-St. Maurice forewarned by the result of the general election, understood the importance of a loyal and generous cooperation with the new leaders that the country had chosen. Yielding to the pressing appeals of the hon. Minister of Marine, my friend the hon. Mr. Duranleau, to whom I wish to publicly acknowledge here my gratitude and appreciation,