

Hon. D. O. L'ESPERANCE rose to move that an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General to offer the humble thanks of this House to His Excellency for the gracious Speech which he has been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament. He said:

(Translation) Honourable gentlemen: I highly appreciate the honour which has been done me by the honourable leader of the House in inviting me to propose the Address to be presented to His Excellency the Governor General.

I take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to offer you my most sincere congratulations and to tell you how pleased I am to see you again occupying the high office which you filled with such dignity and distinction during the closing session of the last Parliament. In asking you to continue as Speaker of this House, the honourable leader of the Government gives you an evidence of esteem and confidence which does you honour and which, I have no doubt, will be highly appreciated by your compatriots.

Four years will soon have passed by since Canada, an autonomous Dominion within the British Empire, decided, by the unanimous and freely-expressed will of its Parliament, to take part in the conflict which was to involve the greatest nations of the world and tax to its uttermost limits the energy, the endurance and the spirit of sacrifice of peoples. When the special session was called at the beginning of the present conflict I was a member of the other House, and there is still present in my memory the unanimous enthusiasm with which the war programme submitted by the Government of the day was received.

The decision taken at the beginning of the war by the representatives of the people expressed well the intentions of their constituents, for, after four years of effort and sacrifice which have been the admiration of our Allies and the astonishment of our enemies, the Canadian people have just decided unanimously to continue this effort until the end. It is advisedly, Mr. Speaker and honourable gentlemen, that I say un-animously; for even those who have been elected in opposition to the Military Service Act have nevertheless received the mandate to support, by other means, the cause of the Allies until the final victory. Not a single candidate, to my knowledge, during the recent general elections, un-

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furled the standard of non-intervention. Some, it is true, favoured different means, but all have been eager to place at the head of their programme the continuation of our efforts.

It was therefore wrong for a certain section of the press, during the late campaign and since, to attempt to take advantage of prejudices against my native province. Some went so far as to apply the epithet of traitor to a people who are generous, law-abiding, loyal to the British Crown, and prepared to make the greatest sacrifices for the defence of their liberties and of the land which gave them birth. Against these erroneous and mendacious accusations I desire to make an emphatic protest. That there have been extravagances of language, that unfortunate and regrettable occurrences have taken place in the course of the last election campaign, cannot be denied. But these manifestations are inherent in our governmental system and accompany in all parts of the British Empire the exercise by the people of their sovereign right.

May I be permitted, before passing to another subject, to express a wish: it is that at the dawn of the present Parliament, at the beginning of this year, which from present indications will be so momentous in consequences for the sublime cause we are defending, this honourable Chamber, the highest in the land, will give an example of tolerance, unity and concord among the different elements composing the Canadian nation to which we are so proud to belong.

The Military Service Act is in force; its machinery, though somewhat complicated, is working in good order. The application of this law is necessarily slow, for it was enacted for the purpose of keeping our military forces up to strength, without, however, doing injury to our essential industries, chiefly agriculture, the intensive development of which is so necessary to the success of the Allies. The judges called upon to decide the numerous appeals for exemption submitted to their jurisdiction do well to proceed with prudence; this wise procedure will doubtless entail regrettable delays, but these delays are justifiable from the standpoint of the vital interests of the country.

The great problems which the Speech from the Throne brings to our attention and upon which we shall be called to deliberate, have for their principal object the co-ordination of our efforts and our means for the prosecution of the war, due regard being, however, paid to the after-war problems, less urgent, but none the less important, if