

*The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King*

Mr. BOURASSA: How do you know I am opposed to the government?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think I know my hon. friend well enough to know where he will be at all events throughout this session. Making the analysis a little more in detail, the 1,909,955 Conservative votes returned 137 members, which is on a basis of 13,941 votes per member. On this basis the 1,989,040 votes would return 142 members opposed to the government, and the 1,714,860 Liberal votes, which do not include Liberal-Progressives, nor any Progressive, Labour, Independent, United Farmers or other class, would have returned 123 members, to which number might, I think, be added the hon. member for Labelle. Those are the figures, Mr. Speaker, with reference to the vote polled on July 28th.

May I say that though we are in opposition, I hope hon. gentlemen of the government side will not think for one moment that we have lost any faith in the principles and policies for which we have fought, or that our belief in the ultimate triumph of those policies and principles is in the least shaken. We believed when we went to the country on certain policies that we were in the right; we believe so at the moment, and we believe that the future will soon prove that we were in the right. We went to the country on great issues; we went down with our colours flying, and we have left a record with respect to the administration of the affairs of Canada which has not been equalled by any administration which has held office in this country. The record of the Liberal party during the nine years it was in office, as regards the increase in the country's prosperity, the administration of the finances of the country, the extension of the country's trade, with regard to transportation, with respect to those questions which concern the relations of the provinces and the Dominion; our inter-imperial relations; our relations with foreign nations; and as respects legislation on all important matters, will bear comparison with the record of any government which has held office in any British dominion at any time. I may say that hon. gentlemen opposite at least paid us this compliment in the course of the campaign, that after our being nearly nine years in office they were unable to level against the late administration a single charge of anything that was in the least discreditable or dishonourable. We have a fine record, and the country will remember that record at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way long after it has ceased to remember the representations and promises beneath which

[Mr. King.]

what was accomplished in that period of time was temporarily lost to view.

Now, Mr. Speaker, may I say to my hon. friend that, this being in the nature of a special session called for one single purpose, namely that of dealing with the problem of unemployment, we on this side do not intend to take up the time of parliament reviewing matters which pertain to the past. We are here at the present time to cooperate with the government in doing all that we possibly can, in as short a time as possible, to meet that special situation with which parliament has been assembled to deal. However, I want to make it perfectly clear that if we refrain at this moment from discussing many of the features of the recent campaign, including the means by which hon. gentlemen opposite have attained power—with the exception of one particular matter on which I intend to dwell at some length—I would not like it to be assumed that in any way we are unmindful of what those means were, or that we may not avail ourselves of other occasions to refer to them. Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker, that this session was called by the Prime Minister for the purpose of dealing with the problem of unemployment. Throughout the campaign he stated that if his party were returned to office he would immediately call parliament together for the purpose of ending unemployment. We wish to join in that effort to the extent of our ability. We intend to assist in every way possible; we intend to allow my hon. friend as much latitude as possible to fulfil the many promises which he made; failing to fulfil them, we shall expect him to carry out the pledge he has given in the event of failure.

May I say first of all, Mr. Speaker, having regard to the fact that this session is called specially for the purpose of dealing with labour matters, that it is a rather singular thing that the only minister missing from the treasury benches opposite happens to be the Minister of Labour. Whether or not this is by design, it is a little difficult to say. If my hon. friend has not found it possible, out of his large following in this house, to choose one hon. member who could fill the office of Minister of Labour, it does not say very much for the democratic sympathies of hon. gentlemen opposite or for their understanding of industrial problems. On the other hand, if he has purposely confined the selection of the minister to one holding a seat in another house, I think in that particular there is still stronger exception to be taken to his course. He must have known