

the crown is the representative of the king, and as the representative of the king he has not, hitherto, so far as I am aware of his administrative acts, been the agent of any department of the British government or of the British government itself. I think the status, so far as His Excellency is concerned, is the status expressed in the British North America Act and not otherwise. It will be convenient, I think, when this report of the Imperial conference committee comes up for further discussion, that the Prime Minister lay on the table of the House a copy of the commission and instructions to His Excellency, in order that we may ascertain more definitely whether there has been any change in his duties and responsibilities as expressed in those two official documents.

I might say also, on behalf of the Conservative members of this House, that we appreciate more than we can express the consideration which the hon. leader of the opposition has shown to our unanimous request in caucus that he should undertake the onerous and responsible duties of leading the Conservative opposition in this House during the present session, assuming those duties and responsibilities at a great sacrifice to himself personally, I believe, in order that he might give the best of his services to the party who support him in the House and to the House as a whole. I can assure him also, I think, on behalf of the Conservative members of this House, that they will give him a loyal and consistent support in the performance of his duties and in assuming the responsibility of his official position.

I may also express, not only on behalf of myself but on behalf of the Conservative members of the House, our appreciation of the fact that, despite the fatigue of the enormous and extended campaign that the present Prime Minister carried on during the recent election, despite the onerous duties imposed upon him at his assumption of office, he did, from a sense of duty I believe, and from a sense of responsibility to this parliament and to the country, lay aside the home duties of his office and take his place as the Prime Minister of this country, with his colleague associated with him, at the recent Imperial conference at London. I may say that in these days of tumult and turmoil, when our social and political life and traditions are being adjudged and weighed in the balance as never before, I am disposed for one to give to every office of authority, and chiefly to the leader of this House and Prime Minister of the government of this country, every support which is necessary, in order

that he may have, as a representative of this country, either in the councils of the empire or in dealing, so far as it is his function to do so, with foreign states, the full support of the parliament of the country, so far as we can consistently extend it to him. Whatever may be our dissensions and differences with regard to our domestic affairs, I believe it is our high duty to uphold the office of Prime Minister and to support the incumbent in carrying out the high duties and responsibilities of that office so far as we may, consistently with our own conscientious judgment of the political necessities of our common country. But to that remark I may add that I do not agree with the Prime Minister, under the conditions in which we find ourselves to-day, with this report of the Imperial conference before us, that any attempt on our part to elucidate clearly the real meaning of the paragraphs of that report constitutes a personal criticism of him, or a personal criticism of the Prime Minister of Great Britain or the prime ministers of the dominions represented at that conference. In the latter part of his address he stated the true position I believe, that that report will be placed before parliament for the consideration of every member of this House, and that it is our duty as individual members on either side to give it our most careful attention, and if we shall find discrepancies or inconsistencies therein, or verbiage which is not clear to our intelligence or to our judgment, to exercise our right to make such comments as may be necessary in order to elucidate the real position in which that report places the country at large.

Now, Sir, in dealing with the debate on the address the Prime Minister—and I may speak of it in this connection—referred to the fact that, after his resignation as prime minister was accepted in June last, certain expenditures were made by the incoming government by warrants of the Governor General, and if I apprehended the meaning and intent of his remarks, they were to the effect that, in his judgment and in the judgment of his colleagues on the government benches, the expenditures so made were unconstitutional and illegal in view of the circumstances in which they were made. I differ entirely from that opinion, and I say to the Prime Minister and to this House that rather than have that opinion go forth to the country as being based upon the facts and upon the law—based it was in part upon the fact that a resolution in the latter hectic days of June passed this House by a majority of one, which was not