

at some future day it may spell disaster to this country. I say to my right hon. friend and to his government that they will have to forgive my imperfections as leader of the great party which sits on this side of the House. We desire to approach this question in a non-partisan spirit, if ever a question was so approached in this chamber; we want to arrange this matter solely in the interests of the Dominion of Canada. I state this notwithstanding the smiles and the jibes of some members who sit on the other side of this House. If we cannot secure serious consideration of this great and important question it will be a shame and a disgrace. We ask for it, and we are willing to co-operate in the programme of the session to the fullest of our ability. We demand our rights, of course, we expect to exercise our full rights, but if ever there was a question in which co-operation should be the basis of parliamentary debate in this House, that question is the report of the conference which has just been laid before the House.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

After Recess

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Before I reply to the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie), may I, on my own behalf as well as on behalf of those sitting with me on this side of the House, extend to him our hearty congratulations upon his having been chosen for the high position which he now holds and which by natural endowments and long parliamentary experience he is so admirably qualified to fill. When I read in the press despatches that my hon. friend had been selected as leader of the opposition and of the party to which he now belongs, I confess recalling his old and long associations with the Liberal party of Canada, I felt that the compliment was perhaps greater to the party to which I belong than to hon. gentlemen opposite and the party to which they belong. My hon. friend will, I am sure, be the first to concede that what he inherits in the way of great natural endowments comes to him of Liberal parentage of which he may well be proud, and I have no doubt he will also remember with considerable pride his long association with the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, of whom he was a trusted follower almost to the very end of his career. May I say that I think my hon. friend, in accepting the position as a temporary one, owing to

the exigencies of his party and under circumstances which necessarily must be more or less embarrassing, did so from very public spirited motives, and in view of that fact he is as much entitled to the thanks of the House as he is to the thanks of his own party.

My hon. friend this afternoon in the course of his remarks, on being interrupted, drew attention to the fact that in this House in the last session or two discussion had not always been carried on with as great a regard for decorum as might have been wished. Let me say at once that while I cannot hope that we shall be in agreement over matters of party controversy I shall be indeed happy to join with him, if he will be prepared to join with me, in doing all that can be done to preserve a right tone in debate in this House and, with your aid, Mr. Speaker, to keep it on as high a level as possible. I do believe that in the last few years there has been much more acrimony in debate, very much more in the way of personal bitterness and feeling, than has been necessary. Just to what cause that may have been due it is not for me to say at the moment. In one sense of the word, I think it is true to say that ever since September, 1925, we have been engaged more or less in a continuous campaign. We had the campaign in the country in the fall of 1925 and it was carried from the constituencies into parliament; and during the last session this House partook, for the most part, much more of the nature of a political battleground than of a deliberative assembly. We carried the discussion from parliament back again to the constituencies and fortunately we have received a decisive verdict, a verdict which I believe is hailed throughout the country with approval inasmuch as, apart from other reasons, it helps to ensure greater certainty and stability in the administration of public affairs. I submit to my hon. friend that this is a moment when we might well join together to do our utmost to maintain the high traditions of this parliament in every possible respect. Indeed, if parliament is to hold in the country that respect which it ought to command, the members of all political parties and groups must co-operate towards this end.

Speaking of the choice of leaders, I observe that my hon. friend from Victoria (Mr. Tolmie), who happens to be in his seat at the moment, has within the last couple of months been chosen leader of the Conservative party in the province of British Columbia. It is somewhat interesting to remark that the choice in this case also is a bit of a compliment to the Liberal party, for I recall that the hon. member, too, is an