

way in which the leader of the opposition has been received in this house during the past two sessions. I am glad to know that we as a fraternity can meet here and differ on the public issues of the day but can go outside and respect each other regardless of party, feeling that each is trying to do his duty here even though his point of view may be different from our own.

In what I shall have to say to-day I shall in some matters commend the government: as to some other matters perhaps the commendation will not be quite so apparent. However, I can promise you this: I will not say anything worse of those who sit on the other side than has already been said about them by the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power).

My third word I wish to be one of commendation to the hon. gentleman who presides over this house for the impartial manner in which he has carried out his duties during the past year or two. My best hope is that as time goes on we shall have no occasion to lessen the high regard we have for him both as a man and as a Speaker.

Since we last met here, sir, three by-elections have taken place in which the government candidates were all defeated. In the meantime there were vacancies created by the regrettable death of one of the members for the dual constituency of Halifax and of the member for Richelieu-Vercheres. It was expected that the Halifax election would follow in due course like the others, but the sitting member for Halifax is reported to have explained to the press that the government had decided to defer the election because "winter conditions in Nova Scotia were not conducive to the satisfactory conduct of an election."

Mr. ISNOR: Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. the leader of the opposition would not wish to quote incorrectly. No such statement was made in regard to the government's stand. Any statement that was made by the present sitting member for Halifax was with regard to weather conditions.

Mr. ROWE: That is what the leader of the opposition said.

Mr. BRACKEN: I am glad to know that all the blame attaches to the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Isnor).

Mr. ROWE: Even the weather.

Mr. BRACKEN: About the same time the Halifax *Herald* carried in its columns an interesting news item which said that the

city firemen were called out to extinguish grass fires in the city of Halifax on December 15.

Mr. ROWE: What a fire!

Mr. BRACKEN: I am sure the citizens of Halifax and of Nova Scotia will put a high value on the wide publicity their local member has given to their so-called unfavourable climate. I am sure from now on when winter comes we shall all make our way to the much warmer climate of Richelieu-Vercheres, now that we know that Halifax and Nova Scotia is a very cold place in which to live.

When the sitting member for Halifax referred to weather, I have no doubt he had in mind the political weather. It has even been suggested that the government was suffering not so much from cold weather as from cold feet. In any event Halifax is unrepresented to-day, and for that the blame rests wholly upon hon. gentlemen who sit opposite. There was the same reason for calling an election promptly in Halifax as there was for calling an election with reasonable promptness in Pontiac, Portage la Prairie, Parkdale and Richelieu-Vercheres.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), commenting on these events, made two observations, one of which was that there were too many parties in this country. What he was going to do about it he did not say. Merely talking about a thing of that kind does not get us very far. There is always a reason for the development of parties, and when we let sore spots develop in this country and allow them to fester, new parties are tempted to arise. If we have more than two parties in this country, we have ourselves to blame; difficulties arose and were not corrected, and this gave rise to the development of the protest parties.

The Prime Minister also made another very interesting comment, to the effect that certain of these members who were elected were returned by a minority vote. That is always true in a country with more than two parties, and it is true today. I do not know what advantage there is in mentioning these things. I imagine that nearly half the members of the cabinet were elected by minority votes. I have not figured it out, but I presume that a very large proportion of the members of this house were elected by minority votes. There is a way of getting over that, if the government wishes to do so, and that is by bringing in a different type of election, such as that which has been followed in certain provinces for some time past. I am not necessarily recommending that; I am only pointing out