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COMMONS

May I say I had fully expected my hon. friend would make a very brief speech this afternoon, that he would come immediately to the point, which is the one of chief concern in the mind of the Canadian people, and to which he referred as such, namely that the country is anxious to know, respecting Canada's war effort, what the government has done, what it is doing and what it proposes to do. That I think is the one question which the people of Canada are asking, and to which they are entitled to have an early and complete reply. They know in large part but they do not know all. Of necessity we have been obliged to wait until parliament met to make a comprehensive statement. Here alone questions respecting matters of national importance can be answered with authority as they arise. However, I am not going to take exception, beyond what I have just said, to the attitude of my hon. friend. I will only say that if the situation was grave on Friday last, it is if anything graver to-day. I hope, in the light of that knowledge, hon. members may not find it necessary to go back and forth over and over ground that was traversed time and again in the recent campaign, but will devote themselves primarily to a consideration of what at this moment, and from this time on, may be of greatest service in meeting the present situation.

I had thought that I would be able to give to the house before six o'clock this evening a statement with respect to what the government has done, what it is doing and what it proposes to do, that would immediately give to the people of our country that sense of security with respect to the government's actions and intentions which all of them wish to have and are entitled to have. Owing to the length of the speech which my hon. friend has made, it is not now possible for me to make that statement before six o'clock. I suppose my hon. friend will expect, and the house may expect, that I should first of all deal with some of the matters he has brought up in the course of his discussion, and that I should also comment on the different paragraphs in the speech from the throne to which he has referred. If I take up a short time prior to six o'clock in reviewing the ground he has run over, instead of immediately bringing forward the statement I have here prepared, it will be in order that I may not be open to the charge of having omitted reference to anything that has been said, but, instead, to endeavour to cover, however briefly, points which my hon. friend has raised.

First of all may I say to him with respect to his opening remarks as to the anxiety that exists in the minds of himself and others con-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

cerning the situation overseas, that this anxiety is not confined to any man, to any party, to any group; it is an anxiety which not only extends over this entire country, but is deeply felt in all parts of the world, particularly in those parts which hitherto have regarded themselves as free. I hope no hon. member on either side of the house will assume that any other member, no matter in what quarter of the house he may be seated, is any less anxious, any less sincere, any less loyal with respect to the part which this country should take in the present crisis than he himself may be.

My hon. friend has spoken of this war as a righteous war, a war in which there can be no question as to the justice of our cause. With that I think we are all in agreement. He has referred in appreciative terms to the speeches delivered on Friday last by the mover and the seconder of the address. I should like to thank him for what he has said of and to these newly elected, young members. The hon. gentleman referred to the speech of the seconder of the address as being a courageous and brave speech. It was courageous and brave, but I think my hon. friend rather spoiled the effect of his remark when he said that the courageous part of the speech which he quoted was received with applause only by members of his group and not by other parties in this house. May I say to him and to the seconder that with every word used by the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair), we on this side are in complete agreement.

At the beginning of this new parliament, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say how much we welcome to the membership of this house so many young men, most of them returned for the first time. As the leader of the opposition has said, they are the ones who will have to deal with the problems of the future, and the future they face would appear to be more difficult than any period heretofore faced by the members of any previous parliament of this country. It is fortunate for them and for Canada that in their earlier years, before becoming members of this house, so many of them gave earnest study and thoughtful consideration to the problems of our country. I doubt if we could have had a better example of the good effect of the many clubs which have been formed in Canada for the purpose of directing the time and attention of their members to a study of political problems than that which was evidenced by the speeches made by the mover and the seconder of the address. The hon. members who moved and seconded the address have given careful study to political problems for many years. They have accustomed themselves to public speaking, and have come

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into parliament not unacquainted with public affairs but already trained in thought and with judgment matured with respect to many of the great questions of the day.

I should like to express to the mover of the address, the hon. member from Lotbinière (Mr. Lapointe), my very warm congratulations upon the exceptionally admirable speech which he delivered. Like the leader of the opposition, I was impressed by the degree of confidence with which he spoke—and this is equally true of the seconder of the address—and the ability of each to hold the unbroken attention of the house. Few if any maiden speeches have been more suited to better the occasion than the speeches to which we listened on Friday last. I can hardly say whether my pleasure as I listened to the hon. member for Lotbinière was greater at his very obvious achievement, than was my pleasure in having the honour of sitting at the side of his distinguished father and sharing the pride he must have felt as he listened to one of his own family address this House of Commons of which he has been a member for so many years. As the leader of the opposition has said, there has been but one previous occasion on which father and son have sat in the same parliament as members of this house. My hon. friend referred to the gentleman who, as head of the Conservative party, held a very distinguished place. I should like to mention the great distinction which belongs to the right hon. the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe, Quebec East) who to-day in point of membership is the oldest member of this house, and who in the affairs of Canada has played a part second to none in furthering the unity of our country. It must be a source of deep pride to him, as it is to all of us, that he has been privileged to hear his son speak words which must have brought to him the assurance that all he has so faithfully struggled and fought for in the course of his parliamentary and public life in the interests of the Canadian people is, God willing, certain to be carried on through years to come by the one who bears his name and who, I believe, will share his fame.

May I also congratulate most warmly the seconder of the address. His words were evidence of the careful training he has had, in part, at Princeton university and, in part, at Oxford university. May I say to him that he has given to parliament at this time of grave crisis in the world's affairs an assurance of the service which from this time on may be expected from him in the public life of our country.

The leader of the opposition took exception to the reference in the speech from the throne to the advisability of making an immediate

study of post-war problems. I have been in parliament for some little time, and I think I know something of the way in which criticism is apt to shape itself. I am afraid that if there had been no reference of the kind in the throne speech, the first word we would have heard from my hon. friend would have been that it had altogether omitted one of the most important matters to be considered at this time, namely preparing as soon as possible to meet not only those great problems which will arise when the war is over but also those problems which are arising already in consequence of the war. I hope hon. members will feel that one of their supreme duties is to make a study of those very questions as speedily and as thoroughly as possible. Surely no one imagines that Canada's war effort will suffer in the least because a study of other questions is also undertaken. In this particular the government is doing what it has sought to do all along, to look forward continually to the situations that are likely to arise in the future.

My hon. friend mentioned the visit to Canada of Their Majesties the King and Queen. He drew attention to the fact that the present speech from the throne does not contain any special reference to that visit. If my hon. friend had been in the house at the time he would have found in the speech from the throne at the opening of the session of 1939, in terms which I am sure he would be the first to appreciate, a reference to the intended visit of their majesties. These were the words:

The announcement that Their Majesty's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth have graciously decided to visit Canada in the months of May and June has been received with rejoicing throughout the dominion. The honour of welcoming their king and queen, in person, on their own soil, is a privilege which will be shared with enthusiasm and pride by all His Majesty's Canadian subjects. The visit will be the first paid by the reigning sovereign to any of his self-governing dominions. It will be the first time a British king and queen have been in North America. It is deeply gratifying that their majesties' tour will embrace all the provinces of Canada.

Then follows a reference to the intended visit of their majesties to the United States. In the speech from the throne made at the conclusion of that session there was again a reference to the visit of their majesties, which placed on record one of the most memorable features of the entire visit, namely the meeting of His Majesty the King with the members of the two houses of parliament. It was in the following words:

In bringing to a close a session in which, for the first time, the king has been present in person in the parliament of Canada, I desire to express the gratification of my government at the universal and heartfelt rejoicing of a united people who are being honoured by the