

The Address—Mr. St. Laurent

clearly before the eyes of every Canadian who has had an opportunity to see Canada as a whole.

As I said a few moments ago, we will seek to fulfil our historic obligation as the official opposition in this house. In meeting the tasks which must be undertaken, and in seeking solutions of the many grave and important problems which must be solved, we will at all times offer constructive criticism and constructive suggestions, and we will be ready to help the government in every way that this can be done by the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, first of all may I once more express my best wishes to you and my congratulations upon the distinguished manner in which you have begun the discharge of your duties. I should like also to express very sincere thanks to the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) for the chivalrous and kind remarks with which he opened his address this afternoon. I thank him personally for his wishes of good health, which I reciprocate. I think both of us come before our colleagues of the house this afternoon with some evidence that there is a prospect of those wishes being realized.

It is gratifying that, whatever the result of an appeal to the people may be, those who made that appeal, and who have come here as a consequence of their electors' response, should feel that they have a responsibility not only to those who supported them, to the members of their party, but also to the people of Canada as a whole. I can give the leader of the opposition the assurance that at all times we will endeavour as best we can to serve the interests of all Canadians. I am sure that the constructive criticism which he has promised to offer as occasion may arise will also be offered in the hope that it will be of benefit to the entire public.

I have much pleasure in joining with him in extending congratulations to the mover (Mr. Boisvert) and the seconder (Mr. Laing) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. These newly elected members have delivered their maiden speeches. We who have been here before know that it is a pretty trying experience to speak for the first time in the House of Commons, and we realize that when such an event takes place at the opening of a new parliament the difficulties are increased by that circumstance. I am sure we are all proud of the admirable manner in which these two new members, the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska and the hon. member for Vancouver South, spoke in moving and seconding the address.

[Mr. Drew.]

As to my friend the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska, those of us who had the privilege of following all his remarks can testify to the fact that he acquitted himself in a fashion most creditable to his electors and to himself. He comes to the House of Commons with a sound reputation arising out of his achievements at the bar and in other fields, and I think we would all wish to say to him that he has added to that reputation by the manner in which, on Friday last, he moved the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Those of us who knew something of the background of the hon. member for the federal riding of Vancouver South were not surprised to hear the address which he delivered. To those of us who have recently seen the part of the country from which he comes, it was no surprise to hear him extol its beauties and resources. The hon. member for Vancouver South has not only taken an active interest in the affairs of his local community, which he served from an early age, and in a distinguished manner, before coming here. Not all but a good many of us on both sides of the house appreciate the fact that for a long time he has been taking a keen interest in the organization work of the Liberal party in his native province.

Those of us who heard these hon. members, all feel, I have no doubt, that they are to be commended for their broad grasp of public questions as well as for their vision. They have impressed us by the fact that they come here with confidence and look forward to a future in which they hope to have some part in realizing the happy prospect referred to this afternoon by the leader of the opposition as the ultimate destiny of the Canadian nation.

No doubt, as the leader of the opposition has said, it will be more helpful and more pertinent to discuss the matters referred to in the speech from the throne when the measures dealing with them come up for detailed consideration. I am sure that all will agree with that. I shall refer only briefly, as the leader of the opposition has done, to some of the measures forecast in the speech from the throne.

First of all, the hon. gentleman referred to that portion of the speech which forecasts a measure to further the constitutional development of our institutions as fitting for those of a completely autonomous nation. He expressed the hope that that could be achieved without provoking any clash with the authorities of our Canadian provinces and also the hope that there would be no attempt to draw that rather shadowy line between matters that may be of special concern to the federal government and parliament and those other