

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed from Monday, September 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. F. W. Turnbull for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is the custom for the leader of the opposition in beginning his remarks in the debate on the address to extend his compliments to the mover and seconder of the address to be presented to His Excellency the Governor General. I have pleasure in following that custom to-day. I confess that my task is neither so agreeable nor so pleasant as was that of the mover and seconder of the address. They have just come into the house and are still elated by the jubilation of victory. They are not expected, perhaps, to look too closely into the means by which that victory has been achieved, nor are they supposed—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

An hon. MEMBER: Sour grapes.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I hope hon. gentlemen opposite will give me the same opportunity to speak that I have given to their leader. I was about to say, they may not be supposed to have to consider the serious responsibility which lies on the shoulders of the ministry in consequence of the many promises made by its members in the course of the campaign, and in virtue of which it has been returned to power, nor have they yet, being more or less new to public life, experienced, as not a few of the older members of parliament have done, some of those disillusionments which come sooner or later to members of parliament and, on occasion, to electorates. Notwithstanding these facts, however, and without endorsing in any way opinions they have expressed, I can say quite sincerely that the manner in which my hon. friends have discharged the obligation imposed upon them, in my opinion, calls for commendation, and I am pleased therefore to extend my congratulations to them. May I also say, inasmuch as they are new members, that I extend to them a welcome to this House of Commons.

As one who perhaps is too rapidly coming to be numbered among the older members of parliament may I be permitted to add at this moment a word of welcome and that irrespective of the side of the house on which they may be sitting, to those who have come for the first time into parliament, I have one real personal regret in the fact—

and here again I would not confine my remarks to one side only—that absent from the present parliament are a number of those who during the last parliament took a very prominent part in debate and other proceedings in this house. We who were here shall miss many of those familiar figures; some I trust will return in the not too distant future.

I am afraid that at this point what I have to say by way of welcome and congratulation is about exhausted. I should like indeed to be able to congratulate my hon. friend the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) and his colleagues upon their assumption of office. I would be the first to do so not only on my own behalf but on behalf of those who sit on this side of the house, if I felt they were entitled to rejoice at the manner in which they have achieved their victory. Having in mind what I have to say this afternoon, having in mind the grave responsibilities which hon. gentlemen have now placed upon their shoulders, I cannot extend congratulations to them or to the country, though I do extend a large measure of sympathy to both.

May I say at once that the victory which my hon. friends have achieved is much more apparent than real. They sit opposite in numbers considerably greater than those who are sitting on this side of the house. Nevertheless, when the vote is analyzed, when we look into the figures of the official returns of the votes cast on July 28, it will be seen that the number of those who voted for hon. members sitting on this side of the house was considerably in excess of the number who voted for hon. gentlemen opposite.

The total vote cast on July 28, according to the official figures, was 3,898,995. Of this vote the Conservative party received 1,909,955, which leaves a total vote opposed to the government of 1,989,040.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): How do you get that stuff?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I get it from the official returns, from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. To this number should be added some votes which would otherwise have been cast had there not been two acclamations. There was an acclamation in the case of the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Gardiner) and of the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa). The number of votes received by the hon. member for Acadia at the previous election was 6,940, while the hon. member for Labelle then received 7,569. If these were added to the total number I have given as opposed to the government the total vote opposed to the government candidates would be 2,003,549.