

Mr. LAPOINTE: You can learn it.

Mr. FORKE: I am afraid, however, that I lack the courage and the perseverance ever to attempt any such thing at this late date. But I am going to make this statement: I have in my household some people who are younger than myself, and I hope I shall have an opportunity of seeing that they at least understand the French language when it is spoken.

I should like to say a few words in regard to the resignation of the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar) as leader of this group. I can assure the House that there was nothing but regret on the part of members of this party, and, I think, probably of all members in this House over the hon. gentleman's resignation as leader. There was no difference of any kind, nothing but the greatest of respect and admiration on the part of his followers, and were it not for the business with which he is connected requiring his close attention, he would still, I suppose, be occupying the same place. We are glad that he still remains a member of this House, and we are likely to see him here just as often as he possibly can come to take part in our deliberations. He was five years in public life, for some time occupying the high position of a cabinet minister, and we are glad to reflect that during all that time he had nothing but the respect and admiration not only of the House but, as well, of the people back home where he was so well known. Let me assure the House that the change in leadership will make no difference in the policies of the group in this part of the chamber. We still retain exactly the same position we have held all along. We are neither supporting nor opposing the government; we are here to give expression to and to advance the ideas and principles which we hold to be in the best interests of Canada and to see them, if possible, carried into effect in the form of legislation.

Now, we all know quite well that we are passing through a very difficult and trying period; we do not need to be told this fact. We believe, however, all of our difficulties notwithstanding, that we are to-day in a very happy position in relation to the rest of the world. Over in Europe we see a very different state of affairs. During the years when the great war was in progress we buoyed ourselves up with the conviction that this was a war to end war. We told ourselves that never again would the world be called upon to sacrifice so much and to suffer such terrible hardships. We have been disillusioned to a very large extent. We realize that human nature after all is liable to the same

old weaknesses and is just as apt as of yore to go astray. Over in the old continent, the home of civilization, we find hatred and jealousy still rampant, standing in the way of peace and the re-establishment of normal conditions. There, there is economic distress which brings untold misery in its train. This world, Mr. Speaker, is growing smaller day by day, and no part of it, no matter how remote it may be, can escape some of the consequences that follow the disturbances and sufferings that are caused in any country to-day. We are realizing in Canada to-day that we shall never have a return to normal conditions, nor have real prosperity, until stable governments are re-established on the continent of Europe, until trade once again flows back and forth as in days gone by.

The Speech from the Throne states that Canada is recovering from the depression following the war and that there is less unemployment. This may be, perhaps, somewhat optimistic, although I hope it is true. Probably there has been some improvement in the situation, but we have still very many difficulties to overcome. We cannot believe that we have surmounted those difficulties, and we must set our faces resolutely towards the future and earnestly seek a solution for all these problems. In reference to the matter of unemployment mention is made of the trek towards the cities. There are many causes to which this fact can be attributed. During the war the high wages paid in connection with war industries attracted a large percentage of the rural population to the cities. A great many of the returning soldiers no doubt went back to the land, but a large proportion of those who left the country districts to work in the cities at that time never returned, and this has naturally accentuated the difficulties that have arisen by reason of the congested state of population in the cities. This condition of things, however, existed to a great extent also before the war, and the country to-day has a serious rural problem on its hands. I would emphasize the fact right here, Mr. Speaker, that this is the problem we have to solve to-day in Canada. When you have made the countryside a good place to live in and have helped to make rural homes happy and prosperous, I have no difficulty in believing, you will have gone a long way towards solving your industrial problems. I really believe that people have attempted to build up the country from the wrong end; they have tried to build it up from the industrial, instead of from the rural, point of view. The development of the natural resources of the country is the first duty that lies at the hands of the govern-