

*The Address—Mr. Davies*

Mr. PERCY G. DAVIES (Athabaska) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is an honour for me to move that this house approves of the speech from the throne. I am not well versed in the French tongue; however, as a large number of French Canadians reside in my constituency, it is through deference for them that I wish to express these few words in their language.

Under ordinary circumstances and in ordinary times, Mr. Speaker, the pleasant task which has fallen to my lot to-day is one which would cause me no concern. Under existing conditions, I must confess that I am beset with many misgivings as I proceed to move that an humble address be presented to His Excellency thanking him for his gracious message. These misgivings do not arise, I assure you, through any lack of confidence in those who happen to be entrusted during these trying times with the management of the affairs of this country; rather is this consideration a source of fortification. But they do arise by reason of my knowledge of the fact that the number of days I have spent in this chamber are few, and to the same extent has been the period of my active association with the public life of this country.

As a newcomer to parliament hill, and as a student of Canadian history, not the least impressive sight to me upon my arrival was the efforts that have been made by this chamber to perpetuate the names of several of its former members who were very closely identified with the progress of this country. I refer to the monuments which are to be found outside this building and on which will be found inscribed the names of Macdonald, Brown, Baldwin, Lafontaine, Cartier, Laurier and others. Posterity has been happy to confer upon these men this tribute, not because of their association with any particular party, but rather, it seems to me, because of the extent to which they have been identified with the progress of this country. I think, therefore, that these monumental tributes must, as we assemble here to-day, particularly having regard to the present crisis through which the world is passing, serve to remind us of the opportunities that exist to-day for public service—for public service as distinct from party service. If this be not true, then the only result following must be, in not a few cases, that the unfortunate position in which many of our fellow countrymen find themselves in will be capitalized by some for narrow party purposes. Is it not even more true to-day than in the century preceding, which gave rise to the saying, that he serves his party best who serves his country best.

[Mr. McIntosh.]

It will not be my purpose to-day to examine to any great extent in detail the address presented to both houses by His Excellency. A perusal of that address, together with the implications that follow, leads me to express the opinion that this session is perhaps destined to be one of the most momentous in the history of this country, with the exception, possibly, only of those deliberations which led to the establishment of confederation and the happy unification of the two great races upon which it was founded. I do, however, crave your leave to refer in some measure of detail to those matters which most concern those whom I have the honour to represent.

Athabaska constituency is populated by approximately 55,000 people. This population is almost entirely engaged in farming, and in respect to those who are not actively engaged in farming, it may be said at any rate that they are entirely dependent upon the prosperity of agriculture for their own livelihood. It would be no exaggeration to say that it is a most cosmopolitan constituency in that amongst its population are to be found in practically equal numbers representatives of the three great races which preponderate in this country—English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Canadians and those of Ukrainian origin, who are now more commonly called our New Canadians. It has not infrequently occurred to me that perhaps one of the tragedies of this depression so far as Canada is concerned, in so far as extremism and radicalism can be said to have been associated with it, has been the extent to which those of our settlers of foreign birth have been misrepresented and misunderstood by a large proportion of the population of this country, largely by reason of the fact that such people have not come in contact with these settlers. Too often to-day it is forgotten that these settlers of foreign birth came to Canada at the invitation of the government, at the invitation of our railways and steamship companies, at the invitation of colonization associations. They were told that here a welcome awaited them; that 160 acres of land was free for the asking, and that an easy living could be earned. It is perhaps unfortunate that once they arrived little interest was taken in them, and so to-day, when here and there among their numbers appears one of extremist views, a tendency to discredit all people of that racial origin is common.

To-day, therefore, with respect to immigration laws and other matters, I ask for these settlers of foreign birth a continuation of that sympathy and consideration to which they are entitled in view of the conditions under which