

of the government, in moving and seconding the address in reply to the speech from the Throne. Whether the two hon. gentlemen, the one who has moved, and the one who has seconded the address, can come within that category I am somewhat at a loss to know. The mover is my senior by a great many years in this House. I had the honour of entering Parliament the same year as the seconder did, and consequently we may be classed about in the same category as to age and parliamentary experience. I frankly confess that I listened to the voice of my old House of Commons colleague with a very great deal of pleasure, although we have during the whole period that we have been in the political field of Canada been upon opposite sides—at least nearly always. I think, however, I may say, and say with very great truth, that upon one occasion at least, his whole mind and his better judgment led him to believe that the late government, of which I had the honour of being the head, was pursuing the correct course, but party exigencies overbalanced his better judgment and led him to cast a vote which, I am quite sure, he has regretted ever since. These are only my inferences, and possibly they may be ill-founded. However, it is just as well on occasions of this kind to say what we think. Before referring to the speech from the Throne I desire, Mr. Speaker—and I take this opportunity of doing it—to congratulate you upon having been selected by your party to occupy the Chair and on the honourable position which you now fill; although, when your name was first mentioned, I was somewhat inclined to think that a departure from the old practice of alternate English and French Speakers should not be departed from, upon reflection I have come to an altogether different conclusion. I have come to this conclusion, and I believe it to be the safest principle upon which to act, that the party in power, in making its selection for the important position of Speaker of either House of Parliament, should look to the qualification of the person who is to occupy that elevated position rather than to his race or creed. I hope the time is fast approaching in Canada when we shall never hear the question raised of a man's birth, or the creed that he professes. We live in a country and under a constitution in which every man has a right to act as his judgment dictates, or as his education leads him, upon matters of this very important character.

I have lived long enough to come to the conclusion, that if a man believes in one particular principle, or one particular creed and thinks it is the best, it is not for me to interfere with his conscience, nor do I think any one else should interfere with his conscience, or with the course which he may think proper to pursue, so long as he does not attempt to interfere with others. I have lived long enough in Canada, I have been long enough connected with party politics to know that that is not always the case in this country, but I hope that the time will never come again when we shall have placards sent about the country to vote for "Morrison and the Pope" or for "Mowat and the Bible." Such were the issues we had when I was a much younger man than I am to-day. Those days have passed away, much as we may accuse each other at the present moment of introducing racial and creed questions in the discussions which have taken place in the elections which have just passed. I say that where that has been done, it were much better that it should be left undone, and that we should adopt a policy in the appointment to offices, and in the administration of the affairs of the country, irrespective of a man's race or a man's religion. We live in a country where we can, under the British Crown, enjoy all the rights and privileges of a British subject, and I hope that that may continue for a long time. I must apologize to the hon. seconder of the motion for my limited knowledge of his mother tongue. I understood him to say that he complimented the House on the accession to it of its present leader, who occupies the high and important position of Minister of Justice. I am fully in accord with him in that sentiment, and I hope that all the future appointments to the Senate may be of equally unexceptional character. If so, we shall have very little to complain of on this side of the House, among those who differ from him on political questions. I could not help having brought to my mind, when listening to the hon. gentleman from Halifax, the old story that I once read of a gentleman who having made a very good speech, and being complemented by a friend said: "Ah, you heard me make that speech; well, I wish you had heard me make the one on the other side." It struck me, if he had only been on this side of the House, and the Conservative government had presented an ad-