

and that this order have precedence over all other business, except the introduction of bills, until disposed of.

Motion agreed to.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED TO MR. BENNETT
—TRIBUTE TO MR. GUTHRIE

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, and the permission of the house, I should like to take an early opportunity to extend my congratulations to the hon. member for West Calgary upon his selection last October as leader of the Conservative party, and upon his assumption in the House of Commons to-day of the office of leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition. Hon. members on this side join very heartily with hon. gentlemen opposite in the welcome which has been extended to my hon. friend on his return to the House of Commons in his new capacity. May I also, as leader of one of the old political parties in Canada, extend to the Conservative party, its traditional opponent, our congratulations upon its choice of a new leader.

The position of leader of a political party, especially when that office is combined with the position of leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, is a very high and honourable position, implying as it does great confidence on the part of one's fellow men, large opportunities of public service, and the discharge of heavy responsibilities. Contrasted with the position of leader of the government, it differs in degree rather than in kind. The position of leader of the opposition requires on the part of the one who fills it a combination of qualities that in many respects is rare. It demands a wide knowledge of public affairs, the ability to criticize boldly and yet justly, and with discrimination, constructive suggestion, an intimate acquaintance with parliamentary procedure, and a disposition to co-operate in the conduct of public business. I am sure all hon. members will agree with me when I say that the hon. member for West Calgary, through his natural endowments, his exceptional training, his ripe scholarship, his high legal attainments, his comprehensive grasp of business affairs, and his wide political experience, possesses in a very marked degree the qualities necessary for the position which he now occupies. I wish to assure him that in the discharge of its duties—the importance and difficulties of which, I perhaps better than any other hon. member am able to appreciate and understand—he will, at all times, have my best wishes. It is too much to expect that my hon.

friend and I will agree on all matters of policy—we shall certainly differ considerably in regard to many things—but I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, we shall be in full accord in the desire to cooperate with Your Honour in upholding and preserving those ancient and honourable traditions of parliamentary usage which help so much to lend dignity and authority to the proceedings of parliament.

May I take advantage of the present occasion to speak of the service rendered this house during the last session by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie). Speaking on behalf of the government, I wish to say that we all realized the difficult and trying position in which in many respects he was placed in undertaking for a single session the temporary leadership of his party. Nevertheless it will I think be conceded by all that his tact and courtesy, his judgment, and his wide experience in parliamentary practice were such as to cause his services to be of the utmost value in enabling the business of the house to be conducted expeditiously and with a due regard to all essentials; and were also of a character to merit for my hon. friend, the thanks of parliament, which, on its behalf, I should like now to extend to him.

Mr. ROBERT GARDINER (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted at this juncture to offer the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Bennett) our congratulations on his elevation to the position which he now occupies? We who come from Alberta are most appreciative of the fact that the Conservative party selected as its leader one of its members from our province. This will probably create a very strong sentiment between eastern and western Canada. It is quite true that we in the west have been to some extent suspicious of eastern Canada; but when a great party such as the Conservative party comes to the province of Alberta for the purpose of selecting its leader, we appreciate the sentiment implied by the choice.

I am sure the hon. member for West Calgary possesses the qualifications for the position. The group with which I am associated do not believe very much in political parties, but so long as the Canadian people desire to have political parties and an official opposition such as we have at the present time, there must be a leader and the Conservative party have made a splendid choice in selecting the hon. member for West Calgary. We are of opinion that cooperation in parliamentary work is just as essential to the welfare of the Canadian people as is