

any extraordinary exertions in order that Canada's efforts might be successful.

The leader of the Opposition in his references to the Prime Minister seemed to consider that the latter should be here under all circumstances and at all times. I do not think such an argument is a very forcible or substantial one. If we consider the Imperial Parliament we all know that the British Premier, the Right Hon. Lloyd George is very frequently absent from the House at Westminster; and in the case of the leader of this Government there are ample reasons for his absence from this Chamber. Every one knows that the arduous labours of the Prime Minister, his extraordinary exertions, his long continued vigilance and his anxiety during the prosecution of the war that it might have a successful outcome and that Canada might succeed in all she had therein undertaken, as well as the important legislation that was rendered necessary after the war closed, broke down Sir Robert Borden's health, and he was obliged to seek in another climate the renewal of his strength and the regaining of his shattered health. Surely no one would be so ungenerous as not to afford the right hon. gentleman such respite as might be necessary in order to enable him to regain his health. I would like, for a moment, to point out that even some hon. gentlemen who have stated that they intend to vote in favour of the amendment of the leader of the Opposition have been sufficiently generous to accord the Prime Minister his due meed of praise for the most important part which he has played in the administration of the affairs of the country during the last five years.

I will quote first from the remarks of the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar) which will be found on page 151 of unrevised Hansard, where he says:

I wish here and now simply to bear testimony to this fact that the Prime Minister of this country carried a burden which very few citizens of Canada appreciated, and discharged the most onerous tasks with a conscientiousness and sense of duty that certainly challenged the respect of those who were intimately associated with him.

Notwithstanding that the hon. member for Marquette intends to support the leader of the Opposition on this amendment, he is sufficiently fair minded, generous and truthful to make that declaration regarding the leader of the Government.

The hon. leader of the Opposition in the course of his speech said that this Government had no policy, and that it had no leader, and then in the next breath he

said that it had three leaders. Let us take up the matter of policy and of leadership. What is the policy of the Government regarding the carrying on of our national affairs, and what is their position regarding the leadership? Not so long ago there was a locum-tenens in the leadership of the Opposition, and the real leader when he took his seat last session was a kind of supernumerary, so that we had the spectacle of the acting leader of the Opposition and his chief of staff conducting the business. I think we have a somewhat parallel case just now, There is the leader, then he has his chief of staff on his left, and he who was the acting leader is now relegated to third place, and I think, if I am sufficiently familiar with military terms, he fills the place of what might be called an adjutant or helper. Therefore we have the leader, the chief of staff and the helper—a delectable trinity to be sure!

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have the hon. leader of the Opposition concluding his speech by moving an amendment to the Address. It is quite proper and perhaps not unusual to move such an amendment, but it appears to me that an amendment of this nature surely should have some semblance of being based on a question of public policy. What is the public policy upon which this amendment is based? As the hon. member for Red Deer expressed it, it is made up largely of preamble. Well, Sir, preamble is not a very important question of policy. Then after all this preamble it winds up by saying:

The regrettable protracted absence of the Prime Minister, the widely accepted belief that it is not his intention to return to the duties of his office—

and so on make it necessary that this Parliament should be dissolved and a new Parliament summoned. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. gentleman was warranted in saying that he did not expect the Prime Minister might return to his duties. But of course that is in line with most of his expressions of thought throughout his speech, which is largely based on rumour, imagination and speculation. But we have had the very comforting intelligence communicated to us within the last few days that the right hon. Sir Robert Borden, barring unforeseen contingencies, will be back in this House before the session closes, in good health and ready to resume his leadership of the Government.

I would like also to refer to some remarks on this amendment by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Clark), who is distinctly