

might be considered to be newcomers to the parliamentary arena; and the very novelty of the task, the novelty of the surroundings, may well cause some hesitation, some trepidation, even to the boldest and the best equipped. The hon. member for Prescott and the hon. member for Portage la Prairie have this afternoon demonstrated their ability under trying and difficult circumstances and are entitled to the warm congratulations of this assembly both upon the knowledge of our public affairs which they have displayed and upon their grasp of public issues. We can predict for them, I think, in the course of their public life in this country usefulness at all times as well as opportunities for turning their abilities to account in this great deliberative body of Canada.

I may perhaps be permitted a personal allusion. When I speak of hesitation and trepidation in respect of one whose duty it is to move or to second the address, I speak from personal experience. It is a little over a quarter of a century since I had the honour of rising for the first time and moving an address in reply to the speech from the throne, and I well remember with what misgivings I performed my task on that occasion. My reason for mentioning the incident to-day is the fact that I see before me at this moment, in the person of my hon. friend from Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil), the man who, over a quarter of a century ago, seconded the address on that same occasion, and I am very glad to be able to say that both in his case and in mine each of us has continuously remained a member of this House, sitting ever since for the constituencies which we respectively represented in 1901.

In the speech from the throne there is on this occasion one matter that deserves perhaps more than passing comment. The near approach of the sixtieth anniversary of confederation is an important milestone in our national history. The proximity of that event is itself sufficient to arouse a certain amount of patriotic fervour in the breasts of our citizens. But when that announcement is coupled with the intimation that we may reasonably expect His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Heir Apparent to the Throne, to be with us at that time the event will certainly become of still greater importance to Canada. Nothing could make that event nobler, grander, more patriotic, more historic than the visit of His Royal Highness, unless it were a visit in person from Their Gracious Majesties themselves. We are also delighted to know that an invitation has been forwarded to the right hon. Prime Minister of

[Mr. Guthrie.]

Great Britain, who has accepted that invitation, and will endeavour if possible to be with us to celebrate our sixtieth anniversary. It has, I think, been correctly stated that up to the present time no prime minister of Great Britain, while holding office, has ever visited Canada. So that we look forward with special interest to the First of July next, when we hope to have the pleasure of welcoming to the shores of this country the Prime Minister of Great Britain during his term of office.

I have to thank my hon. friend from Prescott for the kindly and the too flattering references which he made to myself. I know that I can never measure up to the requirements and to the high standard which he has set me. All I can assure him is that I will do my best in the position which for the time being I am proud to occupy. That position I occupy, of course, by reason of the fact that the election of September last proved disastrous to the Conservative party generally but particularly disastrous in the loss of our great leader. Speaking, not as a partisan, not as a follower of the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen on the Conservative side of the House, but simply as a citizen of the Dominion of Canada, I say that his retirement from public life has been a distinct loss to the public service of this country as well as to this parliament. The Right Hon. Mr. Meighen has been an outstanding figure in the public life of Canada since the year of 1908. He entered this parliament as a youth, as a young man at all events, and from that day until the time of his retirement few men have attained as high a standard or as great an accomplishment as he. First he entered the government of Sir Robert Borden as Solicitor General, afterwards filling several cabinet portfolios. Twice in that brief period he held the high office of Prime Minister of Canada, and for the last four or five years has been the recognized leader of the opposition. An able parliamentarian, one of the ablest Canada has ever produced; matchless in debate in this chamber; a keen observer, a wonderful thinker, a man of an accurate and precise mind, as accurate and precise as any who have ever been in this House, his loss is a tremendous one to this House and to the public life of this country. I believe that in our hearts we all feel that it would be a good thing for Canada and for this House if his present retirement from public life is not too long continued.

My reference to the last general election brings me to another consideration. I know it is frequently said that after a general election it is the privilege of a defeated opposi-