

The Address—Mr. Baldwin

Yesterday the right hon. Prime Minister sought to evade this issue. I am not going to deal with his speech in detail. I am not going to go into the same channels as he entered in his attempt to evade the questions which were asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I think he would have been much better advised as a true leader of a political movement in this country not to have spoken as he did yesterday but to have responded to my hon. friend by dealing with the questions he asked. Unfortunately, he did not see fit to do so. Like some of his colleagues he whined, whimpered and bellyached about some of the reasons for losing the election. Even the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald), that rare, blithe and kindly spirit, murmured some cross words after the election about red necks, I am told. Even that hon. gentleman was seeking alibis for the election results.

• (1230)

I only deal with the Prime Minister's statement, Mr. Speaker, to say that this party will not be deflected from its duty and responsibility to deal with the economic issues and economic evils that plague this country. That is what we were sent here to do and that is what we intend to do. That is what we want to get started on as soon as the Government can be persuaded.

To achieve this we will need the assistance of my hon. friends on my left and across on the other side. I suggest to them that they should review the position they have taken. I suggest to them that they should consider whether, under these circumstances, they are prepared to continue their support of the government. In light of what the Prime Minister said yesterday and in light of his refusal to bring forward legislation—and I believe this is legislation in which they are as interested as we are—are they prepared to sit back and allow him to have his way in delaying those steps which need to be taken for the good of the country? This has been called a House of minorities. If what I saw yesterday is to be repeated, if my friends in the New Democratic Party and in the Social Credit party are to yield up their virtue so easily, I think that in a political sense this House might well be called a House of easy virtue.

It is my intention, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that this debate should be adjourned. I seconded the amendment of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition and it may well be that I am thus prevented from making this motion. However, I suggest that the government be given one more opportunity to proceed in an orderly way for the good of the people of Canada. They should bring forward a copy of the bill to deal with old age pensions today and should table their other legislative proposals. We are prepared to waive all notices required in order to commence debate at once. We are not dispensing entirely with this debate, Mr. Speaker, but what can be said today can well be said a month from now and maybe even better. Let us proceed at once with these measures and let us postpone this debate until a month from now. By that time we could have dealt with the important bills and could have had a budget. Also, my friends to the left could reassess their position and decide whether under the circumstances they still want to support the government. This is the last chance the government will get to make this decision.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. Baldwin: Yes, of course.

Mr. MacEachen: Is the hon. gentleman suggesting that the government ought to introduce legislation and place legislative proposals before the House before the question of confidence has been resolved by the House? Is he suggesting that we ought to call the amendment immediately, dispose of all the motions and thus clarify the question of confidence and then proceed to legislation or is he suggesting that the government should advance proposals for legislation to the House while a motion of non-confidence is still unresolved?

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I think we should see what the government is going to do to find out whether it is entitled to confidence. In any event it now has 109 members and 46 auxiliaries.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi.

Mr. G. A. Percy Smith (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, since the throne speech debate apparently is to continue—I think we all agree that the rules of long standing should not be broken without very serious cause—in opening my remarks I should like to join with other members who have already spoken in extending to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your re-election to the high office of Speaker of this House. During my comparatively short experience here, I have come to appreciate the dignity, the ability and the impartiality with which you have discharged the duties of your high office. I am also appreciative of the courteous assistance you provided me as a new member, and I am sure the new members of this 29th parliament will also soon come to appreciate your unflinching good humour and your helpfulness to all members of the House.

I wish also to extend to Mr. Deputy Speaker my sincere congratulations on his election to this high office. His courteous conduct in the House during the time I have been a member, as well as his ability in debate, make me feel sure that the House has made an excellent choice. Although his riding is Halifax-East Hants in the province of Nova Scotia, he was born in New Brunswick. His connections with the county of Kent, part of which forms part of Northumberland-Miramichi, leads me to hope that I may see him there more frequently in the years ahead.

I should like also, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate both the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Both the mover, the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais), and the seconder, the hon. member for Lachine (Mr. Blaker), both new members of the House, both speaking in both official languages, performed their traditional roles in a manner in which we can all take pride.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the electors of Northumberland-Miramichi for the confidence they have shown in electing me to represent them for a second time. I assure them that it is a great honour to