

Therefore I desire to join with other hon. members of this house in expressing the hope that the right hon. gentleman may be spared for many more years to serve his country.

Mr. JEAN-FRANÇOIS POULIOT (Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, as one of the senior members of the House of Commons, and a Liberal of the old school, I am delighted to join with my esteemed leader from the province of Quebec—whom we are all so glad to see with us to-day—in the tribute that he has so eloquently paid to the leader of the house, the Prime Minister, my chief. There is no greater pleasure than to recognize such an anniversary as this, to extend our congratulations and to express our good wishes—and say it with flowers. I am not endowed, sir, with the gift of flowery language, but the congratulations that I offer and the good wishes that I convey to the Prime Minister, not only on my own behalf but on behalf of all the private members, are none the less sincere.

Before taking my seat I wish also to pay my tribute to you, Mr. Speaker. You have had years of legal training, and you have a thorough understanding of parliamentary procedure and constitutional law. You have honoured the chair of this house. Every hon. member has been delighted to express his satisfaction in having you in the chair, and the house has always upheld your rulings.

May I say also that although I have not always agreed with Mr. Deputy Speaker, the chairman of committee of the whole, nevertheless he did very well and I offer him also my congratulations and best wishes.

Hon. T. A. CRERAR (Minister of Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that someone from the western part of our dominion should join in the felicitations that have been extended to the Prime Minister on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of his election to the leadership of the Liberal party. It is a notable thing that he should have retained, not only undiminished but in an increasing degree with the passing of the years, the confidence of his party. It is a simple statement of fact that the right hon. gentleman has never stood so high in the estimation of those of his political faith as he does at this moment. We all know, that in the cross-fire of political warfare, if it may be so described, and in the heat of political controversy, hard things are sometimes said. But when we sweep all that away and look at the picture in its clear perspective it must be said of the Prime Minister that he enjoys, both at home and abroad, an esteem and standing greater than he has ever before held in his whole public career.

We are passing through strenuous days; a great surge of unprecedented events is coming upon us. It is well sometimes to think of the events of the past and learn from them some lessons for the future.

I simply wish to join my voice with that of the others who have spoken in appreciation of the services the Prime Minister has rendered to Canada, and to testify to the outstanding place he occupies in the esteem and affection of the people.

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I feel that those whom I have the honour to represent in this house would be less pleased if I omitted to extend my best wishes to the Prime Minister on this occasion, and I should myself feel less content did I neglect to say a word at this time. I think the right hon. gentleman has a unique record, as has been pointed out already, and has much cause for satisfaction. I do not know that I have ever heard of anyone else who achieved what he has achieved in the way of long public life, retaining high esteem over a period of twenty-one years. I trust that he may be able to echo in a somewhat prophetic vein, shall I say, the superb words of Browning:

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was made.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that the deputy of His Excellency the Governor General has arrived at the parliament buildings and is waiting to give the royal assent to the bills which remain to be assented to. In the circumstances I hope hon. members who have spoken in such kindly terms in reference to the period of my leadership of the Liberal party, and hon. members who have received their words so graciously, will pardon me if I do not use more than a word or two in acknowledging what has been said.

Naturally one has reason to be deeply grateful that at the end of twenty-one years of leadership of a political party one should be privileged to listen to the expressions of good-will it has been my privilege to hear to-day. I am indeed profoundly grateful for the confidence which I have enjoyed on the part of so large a number of the citizens of Canada over such a long period of years. I am particularly grateful for the loyal support of the party to which I belong, particularly that of the members of the government and hon. members in this House of Commons, which has made this confidence possible; and may I say I am in no less measure deeply grateful for the good-will which has been extended by