

right hon. friend the congratulations of hon. members of this side of the House, in which I know hon. members on his own side will very cordially join, that, despite the many vicissitudes of a long and strenuous public career, he has been spared to attain this distinction, and to enjoy it in the capacity in which he meets Parliament to-day.

With all that my right hon. friend has so eloquently and appropriately said, we of His Majesty's loyal opposition are in full accord. Did time permit, and were it fitting so to do, one might dwell at great length upon the thoughts which this occasion inspires, and which the dignified and noble proportions of this imposing edifice cause to be uppermost in one's mind. Great as the temptation is to speak of much that is suggested here, with the permission of the House I shall content myself with but an added reflection or two upon the notes that are sounded as one contemplates the impressive loveliness and vast architectural beauty of these Halls of Parliament in their finished state.

It is not always easy to interpret the mind of genius; but genius lies in the ability to interpret to others the mystery of the greatness that lies everywhere about them. This, in a word, through the medium of these buildings, is what the chief architect, Mr. John Pearson, and Mr. J. O. Marchand, his associate, and others with them have succeeded in doing, with such admirable skill and such perfect taste, as respects our vast Dominion. The committee of both Houses in charge of the work of reconstruction, the departmental officers and officials of Parliament, and all who have assisted in thought or execution of design, are to be congratulated upon what we behold to-day. They are not less to be commended for permitting the architects great freedom in the working out of their ideas. If it is appropriate, as I believe it is, to single out the chief architect for special mention on this occasion, I would remind the House of the tablet which appears in St. Paul's in honour of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of that great cathedral: "Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice"—"Reader, if it is a monument you seek, look around." If it be praise of Mr. Pearson and his associate that is demanded, let it be uttered by the visible embodiment of their conceptions.

The first note sounded through a contemplation of these buildings, even in their unfinished state is that of our Canadian nationality. First and foremost, comes the

thought that this is a national edifice, that it symbolizes Canada. More and more, as the years go by, we shall come to feel towards these buildings as the Englishman feels towards the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. How strange that they too should have been destroyed by fire some eighty years ago! These Halls of Parliament, like those yonder, represent our nation's story; they are the centre of our nation's story; they are the centre of our national life. With consummate skill, exception.

The stone of which the walls of the interior are constructed bears upon its surface the marks of the sea, though it comes all the way from the Middle West. It is Canadian stone. Like the Laurentians which we see as we look towards the setting sun, it reminds us that, recent as our country's written history may be, its material foundations belong to the oldest known geological formations to be found anywhere on the surface of the globe.

Francis Parkman has told, in one of his great works descriptive of Canada's past, of how, while New England was still a wilderness, and the settlers of Virginia scarcely dared venture inland beyond the sound of a cannon shot, Champlain, in the near vicinity of the Rideau and the Chaudiere, where these very buildings stand, was planting on shores and islands the emblems of his faith. The daring exploits of those early intrepid explorers and Christian missionaries, that form the romantic and heroic background of our early history, are depicted here and there in sculpture and painting throughout these halls, reminding us of the great race that first brought the arts of civilization to this part of the North American continent.

In the main entrance, the central column, commemorative of Confederation, washed at its base by a mythical sea, stands symbolical of the British Isles, whence sprang our political institutions. It serves to remind us, as well, of what a noted historian has referred to as "the expansion of England," and the other races that have combined to make our Canadian nationality what it is. When completed, the fan-shaped projections of this central column will unite with like expansions from the columns that take their rise from the outer edges of this central court, thereby forming a series of arches symbolical of the several provinces of the Dominion. In this splendid way will be commemorated our Confederation, the unity of the British peoples, and what the Parliament of Canada and the Legislatures of the