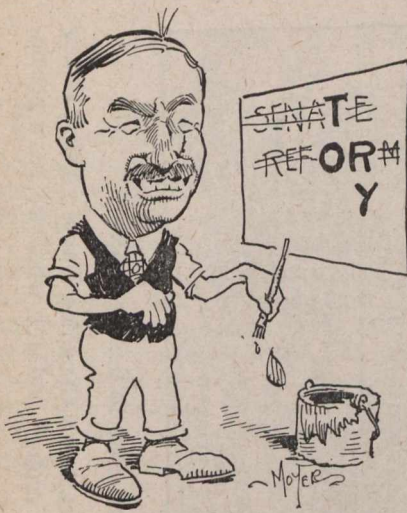


THE BORDEN CABINET.—X. THE GOVERNMENT LEADER IN THE SENATE

By H. F. Gadsby



Hon. James Lougheed.

ALTHOUGH Senator James Lougheed, the Government leader in the Upper Chamber, is sixty years old and ought to be chloroformed, if Sir William Osler says right, his vigor of mind and body is such that a long career of public service lies before him yet. Indeed, considering the peace of mind which the Senate brings, the well-known longevity of Government annuitants, the age limit achieved by Senator Wark, the soul's ease that comes of being a millionaire, and other lulling circumstances, this fair Canada of ours is warranted in expecting from Senator Lougheed forty more years of good work—for himself, and for his country.

The Senator is an upbuilder. He is upbuilding the West and, like many other upbuilders, he is in the happy position of upbuilding his own bank account whenever he does any upbuilding for his native land. As Finance Minister White would say, the two things synchronize, which being interpreted means that when you play both ends for the middle you're always sure of a dividend somewhere. Senator Lougheed combines the best qualities of the ant and the bee, but does not suffer from the disadvantages of either. He allows nobody to rob him of his store, in which respect he is several points ahead of the bee which works its head off to gather honey for other people. Senator Lougheed makes no mistakes like that.

Forty years more in the Senate! Long before that Senator Loug-

heed's mission in life—Senate Reform—will have been accomplished. Certain gloomy and meticulous guessers say it will take twenty years to reform the Senate. But my bet is that three years will do it and that somewhere about the fall of 1917 Senator Lougheed will be able to say to Premier Borden, if Senator Lougheed is so disposed and if Sir Robert Borden is still premier, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen a comfortable Conservative majority in the Upper House". If the Tories are out in 1917 this bet is off.

The chances are that Senator Lougheed, who is now the leader of the Government minority in the Senate, will remain there long enough to head a Government majority and, after that, not so very long after, an Opposition minority. Senator Lougheed has spoken brave words about Senate Reform but when it comes to a show-down it's an increase of Tory senators that he wants—simply that and nothing more. If he can't get the increase now, he'll wait until after the next general election when nine senators will be added from the prairie provinces. It goes without saying that they will be of the same party as the Government in power.

Such is Senator Lougheed's idea of Senate Reform. You thought he would make it elective? Bless your heart, no! It's not a change of constitution reformers like Senator Lougheed have in mind but a change of politics. Their plan is to have a subservient Upper House when their party is in office and an obstructionist one when their party is not. Senator Lougheed's solitary original contribution to a theory of Senate Reform which has been practised since Confederation is that the new Senators should be young men so that they will live long to embarrass Liberal Governments. Senator Lougheed has yearned for a Conservative majority in the Senate ever since 1906 when he succeeded Sir Mackenzie Bowell who had strained his neck looking back to see that the Grim Reaper reaped only in the right places. Since becoming leader Senator Lougheed has also developed a habit of watching the clock.

Besides being a keen business man, Senator Lougheed is a lawyer

of repute and a K. C. Being a good lawyer and a good business man go together oftener than people suspect. As a lawyer Senator Lougheed is good enough to have been the C. P. R. solicitor at Calgary for many years until R. B. Bennett got the job. Senator Lougheed loves R. B. Bennett as much as one would expect under the circumstances. When Senator Lougheed was taken into the Borden Cabinet he represented the Strathcona interests, the All Red Route and other little matters that might be forwarded in the All Red Chamber. Senator Lougheed did his duty by that distinguished philanthropist who loved Canada so much that he lived in England in order to be able to stand off and admire us. I take that back. I should have said—admire us and stand us off.

One of Senator Lougheed's chief qualifications as Senate leader, a qualification that brings the Senate into close and intimate touch with its great exemplar, the British House of Lords, is his rich, crusted, old English Stilton accent. No peer of the realm has anything on Senator Lougheed of Calgary when it comes to the broad "a" and the slighted "r". If any other citizen of Calgary than the one who collects rent from half the town said "ahftahnoon" instead of afternoon he would be dumped in the Bow River. But Senator Lougheed gets away with it and hands out clotted cream English as a regular thing. He calls a "cab" a "cob", thus putting the cart before the horse, so to speak, but all in the interest of beautiful pronunciation. You don't look for an English accent with a Scotch name like Lougheed but the Lougheeds probably accepted it along with the Act of Union between the two countries in 1907. That's the only way I can account for it. From the ease with which the Senator handles it, I should judge it had been in the family a long time and he certainly didn't catch it in Brampton where he was born, or in Toronto where he lived until 1883. It probably grew up with the Senator when he went to Calgary to grow up with the country. There were many remittance men in Alberta at the time, and accent was about the only thing they had to give away.