

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: There was never a more opportune time than the present. I do not believe that in the history of our civilization there has ever been a time when the public and governments have been so impressed as at present with the fact that the old system must be radically departed from.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Is it not a matter which is more for governments than for boards?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: We of course have a strange conception of government. Government has been handed down to us traditionally. We have associated it with the periods of autocracy when the Sovereign appropriated the revenues of the Crown to himself irrespective of the voice of the people. Government as we know it to-day was finally wrested from an autocratic sovereign, and the will of the people prevailed, and to-day we quote it with authority, and look upon it as an Ark of the Covenant on which our hands must not be lade. But, after all, government is only a human institution. It is as human as any institution we have, and there is no reason why business men, not only in this country but in any country should not revise their system of government. We have the same antiquated, archaic system to-day that we had at the time of Confederation, although our debt to-day closely approaches \$3,000,000,000 and our revenue will closely approach half a billion dollars, whereas at the time of Confederation our Supply Bill did not exceed \$20,000,000, and it is doubtful whether the revenue of the country exceeded the same amount. Yet, we have not readjusted ourselves. The world has grown since that time. The greatest war in history has been fought since then, and has revolutionized every institution of civilization. But still we go on applying the old machinery without any attempt at readjusting. I say that the time has arrived when the intelligent men, not only in Canada but elsewhere, should apply business methods to government exactly as they apply them to the business organizations to which they belong.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: May I be permitted to ask this question? My honourable friend points out—and I am not prepared to entirely disagree with him—that this government's expenditures ought to be subject to inquiry by special boards. May I point out to him the signal failure to produce the results he hoped for in a very notable instance?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Would not my honourable friend do very much better

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT.

by making a speech? I should like to hear my honourable friend expatiate upon that subject. It is one worthy of my honourable friend's thought, and I hope he will give the House the benefit of his views.

We have already confessed to the weakness of our departmental machinery by appointing a Railway Board. We entirely eliminated the administration of that very important utility, the Intercolonial Railway, from the Railway Department, because we said the Department could not administer it. We did the same thing with the Grain Board. We placed upon the Statute Book a confession that it was impossible for the Government to administer properly the great wheat crop of the West.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: May I point out that notwithstanding the reports made by experts we have not been able to get our Government to follow their advice. Take the Hudson Bay railway, for instance, and the deepening of the Welland canal for the benefit of the Americans.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Even the present Government has outlined a Board for rectifying those abuses which I point out, so my honourable friends may follow the operations of this Board.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: My trouble is that I do not think the Government will follow the recommendations.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: If this Government is too obstinate to do this, the only thing to be done is to replace it by another. I can only say that I know a Government that will carry out its advice along this line.

I was going to refer to many other matters, but I have kept the House much longer than I intended, and I have exceeded my time. I must say that it is very gratifying to learn from the Government that they are so deeply interested in the many large problems foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne, and we shall look forward with a great deal of anxiety and interest to the crystalization of what is proposed into legislation, and I would suggest to my honourable friend the leader of the House that the Senate should be kept busy in the earlier months of the Session by giving due consideration to the many measures which, as I have said, are promised. They all deal with large questions, national questions, which enter not only into the future of Canada, but into the everyday lives of our people, and I express the hope—and there is no reason why we should not look forward to its realization to some extent