

It is obvious that difficulties between the two Houses must arise when a government is in power which is supported by a large majority in the House of Commons and only by a small minority in the House of Lords.

The committee do not wish to imply, that in their opinion, the majority in the House of Lords should be made mechanically to correspond with the majority in the House of Commons, but they feel that the party in power in the elected chamber should be able to count upon a substantial following in the House of Lords.

Then clause 35 reads as follows:

In order to bring the House more into harmony with changes of political opinion in the country, some members of the committee desired that persons experienced in local or municipal administration should be introduced from outside at each general election to sit and vote in the House of Lords for the duration of the parliament. To effect this object various proposals to admit to the House elected representatives from county councils and municipal corporations, whether peers or not, were discussed. On this capital question the committee were almost equally divided and were, therefore, unable to make any recommendation.

I quote this to show the drift of public opinion even in England, where the House of Lords itself recognizes that in order to preserve that body they must introduce the principle of election, and give an incoming administration the right to increase the number of its supporters in the upper Chamber. They all agree on the first proposition to which I have referred, that is, of the 665 peers 200 should be elected to begin with, and that even election will not give a life seat in the House of Lords but only a seat for that parliament, so you can quite see the feeling of the House of Lords is that they have fallen behind the times and want to recover their position. Now, I do not want to see the Senate of Canada fall behind the times. It is made up of men who are quite up to date and recognize the rights of the electorate of this country, and I have confidence enough in the hon. gentlemen who now listen to my voice that they will be equal to the occasion and will devise some means by which we shall get more in line with the public sentiment of this age. I submit my proposition as an improvement at all events on the constitution we now have. It does not disturb the gentlemen who occupy seats in this Chamber now; it brings about the change in a gradual way. It is not revolutionary in any sense; but post-

pone it another five years and I cannot foreshadow the consequences. If the House of Lords has been obliged to give away to public opinion, will not the Senate of Canada be obliged to follow the same course in this country where popular views are more freely expressed and the claims of the people are represented in changes to a greater extent than in Europe? It is not only in Great Britain, but in every country in Europe that this desire for change has been manifest. Countries that 50 years ago were governed by the aristocratic classes have had to yield to the popular demand for representation in the upper chamber, and it has been granted. If it had not been granted, a revolution would have ensued, and in some cases the changes have been brought about by revolution. The plan which I suggest for an elective system is not open to any objection. In large areas the big man in that area will be the one selected. In a smaller way that was the effect in the early fifties. From 1850 up there was a determined expression of opinion in Upper and Lower Canada that the Legislative Council should be swept away, and they were swept away. The Legislative Council existed for years, but they had to give way. Their patents were as strong as ours, stronger in fact, because royal gifts had greater permanence than they have to-day. In the House of Assembly in 1856 the Act was passed with practical unanimity—the vote stood 80 to 12, and not a single member from the province of Quebec voted to sustain the nominating principle. The twelve in minority were all members from the province of Upper Canada. I quote that as showing the sentiment at that time in Ontario and Quebec. Has that sentiment changed? Not a bit of it. Give any justification for raising an agitation on that subject and you will find that sentiment will arise and be too strong for this House to meet or overcome. We have evidence that the elective principle operated well in those days. It brought to this Chamber men who were distinguished in the various activities of life. Mr. Allan, who ornamented the Speaker's chair, was one of the elected members. I had great pleasure, although in opposition to him when he was Speaker.