

one contrasts the proceedings in this parliament with those of any other legislative assembly on earth, they will be found to compare favourably with those of other assemblies.

My hon. friend referred to the British House of Commons, a noble institution. It has maintained high standards; but I submit that any one who has followed the discussions in the British House of Commons, even in this time of war, will have observed that, in many particulars, they have been more acrimonious than has been the case with discussions that have taken place here. And as far as comparisons with what takes place in congress or elsewhere are concerned, I think this House of Commons can stand on its own feet without fear. However, I am pleased that my hon. friend is going to do all in his power to see that this high standard is maintained, and I shall certainly do what I can to cooperate with him toward that end.

My hon. friend asked me to speak on a large number of subjects. I had rather made up my mind that I would follow a different course this session if possible; that I would not make speeches that were too long. I have been criticized a great deal on that score, and I must say as I listened to my hon. friend to-day I began to see that such criticism may be very just. Therefore I hope he will not expect me to answer to-day all the questions he has raised. But at the appropriate time during the course of the session I shall do the best I can to give him the information he wishes.

He spoke at considerable length of what he referred to as dissatisfaction with the administration. He spoke more particularly of dissatisfaction with what is sometimes referred to as a growing bureaucracy. My hon. friend referred to it in different connections. He referred to it in speaking of the Winnipeg programme. He referred to it as a departure from responsible government because of the powers given to boards, and the orders passed under the War Measures Act.

No one deplores more than I do, and I am sure hon. members in the house generally do, that, in a time of war, it is necessary to establish boards to do what responsible ministers in time of peace are able to manage without such additions to the administration. But in times of war it is simply impossible for ordinary government departments to hope to administer the different policies that have to be carried out except with the aid of boards of one kind and another to assist the ministers.

My hon. friends opposite have changed their attitude very much toward the government in

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

that particular. I remember in the first year of the war, and even up to late in 1941, we were being told over and over again that what the country wanted was not political control in matters pertaining to the war. What they said was wanted were independent bodies, bodies that would be free of political control altogether. The leader of the opposition of the day was continually saying that the administration was seeking far too much to control matters. Look at the financial papers of the country and see the extent to which they, at that time, were saying that the government was keeping the administration of all these matters far too much in its own hands; that we ought to have experts, leading men in industry and business throughout the country, enlist them in the service of the government, give them a free hand and not interfere with them, allow them to act independently.

But now that the government has enlisted very large numbers of business men and business experts in the administration of war affairs, my hon. friends say, No! no! these gentlemen should not be allowed to administer these things. The government ought to take into its own hands the control through the responsible ministers who are the heads of the different departments; in other words, there should be more in the way of political control. It is easy to criticize, but I ask hon. members to place themselves in the position of the administration in dealing with war affairs. I submit that the only way in which it is possible for the government to carry on in time of war is to have allied with it in matters of administration such organizations as are necessary, organizations improvised in connection with carrying out the affairs of the administration. That does not mean that the government or any minister of the crown ceases to be responsible for the administration of affairs; the responsibility must always rest on the ministry.

In order to bring home more clearly to hon. members what I have in mind, may I say that when the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston), dealing with the affairs of his department, has made the appointments of the military authorities, which he thinks are necessary and best, the generals and other officers who have command on the military side, he is still finally responsible for any mistakes which they make. The last thing, however, he would be expected to do is to be continually interfering with those who have been given a particular task to perform on the field of battle.

It is exactly the same with respect to the ministry in relation to the other departments which have to do with the administration of