

thousands, if not millions, of dollars a year, and we might be in a position to make some real progress. It is all the more necessary because we are face to face with a lot of very serious financial problems. Recommendations have been made by some members of this House from time to time during the last few years in regard to what might be called new methods of finance. The Acting Minister (Mr. Robb) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) before him have in general ridiculed these suggestions. I am not going to say now that all of the suggestions are wise and practical, but I do submit to the minister that there ought to be some effort made to study them. We should not simply dismiss them scornfully with a contemptuous wave of the hand, as though they were unworthy of consideration. It is quite possible that we may discover very valuable help and very great assistance in connection with our financing in some of these newer methods, but as I said there is absolutely nobody in the Department of Finance, so far as I can find out, who is at all competent to investigate these particular matters. I appeal, in conclusion, to the minister to consider the propriety of appointing, or attaching to the department in an advisory capacity, a man who has some such qualifications as the present Dominion Statistician.

Mr. ROBB: I should like to say at once that I have no pretensions to having the financial qualifications of my hon. friend from Brant (Mr. Good), nor am I prepared to discuss the Department of Agriculture with him, because I am told that he is just as good an agriculturist as he is an economist. But I wish to repeat again what I said a few moments ago: From my experience within the department, in my judgment the present Deputy Minister of Finance is an excellent public servant, and I hope he will remain in the service for many years. We have associated with the department many other excellent officers, men of wide experience, who take as keen an interest in the affairs of the country as if they were their own. I recognize the abilities of the Dominion Statistician. I was in that department for some years, and I know that he is a good officer. I have no doubt also that there are many good officers throughout many of the departments, but, looking over the accounts as they come before me and scrutinizing them through the Treasury board, I am bound to say that some of the departments to which my hon. friend has referred I do not look up to as departments of economy.

[Mr. Good.]

Mr. GOOD: The minister really cannot have understood me properly. I do not wish to reflect, and I am not reflecting upon the integrity, ability, or certain other qualifications of the deputy minister, but I submit this: that the minister himself would never ask him to give an opinion on a matter of mineralogy or on a matter of medical or surgical science; he has not studied those matters. I am not blaming him. But in financial matters nowadays, particularly under present conditions in Canada, we need the advice of men of a different type from those we have. I am not saying anything against the deputy minister in his capacity as a faithful executive officer, but I do say that, so far as I can find out, he has not the qualifications that are necessary to give sound advice in many matters of urgent importance.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Would the hon. member describe the kind of man he has in mind that would be needed for the department? I hope he will do so without too plainly referring to himself or myself.

Mr. GOOD: I may say very frankly that I certainly have no ambitions, or qualifications either so far as that is concerned; I never dreamed of anything of that kind. But may I state this to the minister and the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen): a couple of years ago I discussed this matter with two government officials who occupy very prominent positions in the service at the present time, and who, by reason of their previous training, were, I think, competent to give an opinion on this point, and both of them—I do not want to mention their names because their opinions were given to me in confidence—expressed themselves very strongly in regard to this particular situation. As I say they are men of the highest standing in the government service, so I am not relying wholly on my own opinion.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Would my hon. friend say what the training of these officials was without giving their names?

Mr. GOOD: That might lead to their identification. I think perhaps I have said enough.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Perhaps the minister has received by this time some particulars as to where the money was applied last year.

Mr. ROBB: I have not that before me yet but I will get my right hon. friend a statement.

Mr. MEIGHEN: For this evening?