

precarious situation of the country demands prudence and economy not only on our part but on the part of everybody, not only in the higher spheres but among the masses. The country must extricate itself from the dilemma. The Government will set a good example and it will surely attain its object if the public will lend it a strong hand.

The present Government is not a class Government. It rests upon foundations of the purest democracy. It is neither radical nor reactionary. It is not divided into two groups, one which toils and another which reaps. No; on the contrary, it lives and will pursue its destiny preaching equality of classes and of the legitimate aspirations of individuals. Its mission, shall we say, is providential. In 1896 and the years immediately succeeding, Sir Wilfrid Laurier saved the country from the dilemma in which he had found it. The task is truly very heavy; but, with the support of the representatives of the people, and that of the people themselves, the Government will again perform the miracle of 1896.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Honourable gentlemen, I am not indifferent to the fact that since we last had the pleasure of meeting in this Chamber we have exchanged sides, and in the political contest which took place on the 6th of December last the Government of which I was a member succeeded in taking third place. The present Government has not been sufficiently long in office to declare a distinctive policy which we can discuss with advantage, nor has it been long enough in office to have a record which we might criticise. My disposition, therefore, would not be to criticise the policy of the Government nor of the party which it represents, because of an absence in that direction. In fact, I am at a loss to see any particular distinction between the Speech from the Throne which fell from the lips of His Excellency last week and a speech which the late Government might have submitted for the purpose of opening Parliament. It seems to me that, so far as the party which those who sit upon this side of this House represent, we might consider with some advantage the reasons which led to the reversal which took place in December last, and under which we have exchanged places with our honourable friends on the opposite side of the House. I am not disposed to cry peccavi, to admit that in any sense we have sinned, or that in the performance of our duty we have fallen short of what

the country would naturally expect from a Government which had held office for the last ten years; nor am I prepared to admit that the results of the late election were expressive in any sense of a condemnation of the late Government, as to its policy, or its acts. I venture to say with a reasonable degree of confidence that the Government which has just entered upon office will not depart to any radical extent from the policy pursued by the late Government. That is probably as high a tribute as I can pay to the Administration which has retired from office. An individual or aggregation of individuals, in their aggregate capacity, suffering a loss or a defeat in the ordinary fields of activity, would naturally take a retrospective view of such a situation and seek to inquire into the cause which led to reversal. It seems to me that possibly I might be able to spend my time more advantageously in the short period allotted to me in dealing with this subject if I were to look to the causes which led to this reversal rather than to make any criticism of the campaign carried on by my honourable friends during the late election contest.

We cannot overlook the fact that the Borden Government came into office at the end of 1911, at a time when an era of prosperity, when a boom which had swept over this continent—probably the greatest of any that we have experienced in our time—had about ended. That Government inherited, as we all know, the many problems which had been assumed by the Laurier Government, problems which had not been fully developed. We inherited at that time, for instance, the railway problems, which were probably the biggest problems that any Government since Confederation had to solve up to that time. I do not propose to enter upon any discussion of these problems at the moment, except to say that, from the time the Borden Government assumed office until 1914, when the world's great war confronted us, not only was the time of the Government occupied in endeavouring to solve these problems, but the financial abilities of this country were strained to meet the obligations then maturing.

It cannot be said that Parliament, during the period from the beginning of the war until its close, manifested any disagreement with the Government as to the policy which it pursued upon that subject. I think our opponents will agree with us that the Government of that day