

For my part, from the moment I entered this Chamber, I felt reluctant to call the leader who sat opposite the Government representative the "leader of the Opposition". That term was somewhat repugnant to me because it implied a systematic official Opposition, and I did not see the role of the Senate in that light. It seemed, according to the dictum of the founders of Confederation, that the function of the Upper House was to tender sympathetic advice to the Government, and to postpone or oppose or modify the measures of the Government according to its own good judgment without any party bias. Having these sentiments at heart, I confess that, in assuming the direction of the legislation in this Chamber, I disliked the idea of crossing the floor, having been last Session at your left, Mr. Speaker, and now coming to sit at your right. What did that action purport? Its meaning was that there were in this Chamber victors and vanquished. It seemed to take into account the fact that there had been elections in the country, elections which, to my mind, should affect the popular House but not this Chamber; and I had occasion to tell my honourable friend from Calgary (Hon. Sir James Lougheed) that I was perfectly agreeable to and even insistent upon his remaining on this side of the House.

I thought also, in order to eliminate party politics, that this Chamber should have no Ministers, either with or without portfolio. I was told that the Government business should be handled in this Chamber by official representatives of the Government. I felt that there was a better way—that, instead of everything being in the hands of one man, each Minister could very well select a Senator as his representative, and that, instead of one man taking charge of public Bills, that service could be assigned to ten, twelve, or fifteen Senators. I felt, and I still feel, that we should safeguard the independence of this Chamber, and keep it uninfluenced by any outside pressure. I felt, and still feel, that this Chamber should owe its fealty only to its King and country.

Party divisions in this Chamber have created this state of mind. We have leaders. Well, let the leaders direct; let them lead; let them carry the responsibility and do the work. If the leader set up as that of the Opposition criticises, there is a wave which carries a certain number and causes them to think and feel with him; if—and this is more serious—the leader ceases to criticise and says amen, a vast

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number in this Chamber will be disposed to repeat amen. I do not believe this is the proper function of the Senate. The Government did not see eye to eye with me when I suggested to its leader and his colleagues that Cabinet Ministers should not sit in this Chamber. The Government was agreeable as far as Ministers holding portfolios were concerned, but thought there should be one who would have a first-hand knowledge of the business of the Government in order to lay it before and impart it to this Chamber. I recognize that the duty of the Government is to furnish information, and that much I intend to do to the best of my ability; but when I have performed that task, it is my feeling that the Senators are then supreme in the judgment which they exercise. For my part, I refuse to lead a Ministerial party in this Chamber; I claim no followers; I shun party discipline and the party whip. I invite criticism of the measures of the Government, criticism from the right as well as from the left; and I feel that it is the responsibility of each Senator to try to improve the legislation that comes before us.

It will be obvious to honourable gentlemen that I do not seek uniformity of thought in this Chamber. In every deliberative assembly the trends of thought are many, and the ideals of government diverse. All shades of opinion are to be found within the walls of every house of parliament, be it an upper or a lower house. These various opinions will be given expression to more freely if they are given full play in an atmosphere of perfect independence.

The Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver contained three matters to which specially I would like to revert: Finance, Railways and Immigration.

I believe it is the duty of the Government to reduce the expenditure to the greatest possible extent. Speaking for myself, and I trust for the Government as well, I cordially invite the co-operation of this House in the task of restoring equilibrium in our finances. I want to draw the attention of new members of this Chamber to the powers of the Senate with reference to money Bills, as expressed in a resolution adopted unanimously by this House some years ago. I find in the Journals of the Senate of 1918 that the Honourable Mr. Bériquet moved:

That a special Committee be appointed to consider the question of determining what are the rights of the Senate in matters of financial legislation, and whether, under the provisions of