

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: That is correct.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: I am unaware of any large industrial, commercial or financial institution that has not its board of control to supervise minutely all expenditures made, but I challenge my honourable friend to point to any protection which the Government of Canada has in regard to its expenditures. Every man who is at the head of a branch or occupies a position of any authority is a law unto himself in the matter of disbursements. We know that after a man has been in the Public Service for a little time all his sense of thrift, economy and retrenchment becomes atrophied. All he thinks about is expenditure. He reaches out to secure for himself more power, more responsibility, more authority, by means of the expenditure which he makes and the power which it gives. It does not require any great effort to visualize what a competent Board of Control could do by going through the various departments and ramifications of the Government, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and investigating the needless expenditure of millions of dollars which is being incurred to-day. Millions of dollars of expenditure are being made that could be saved to this country. I would commend to my honourable friend his discussing with his Government the necessity of Canada to-day appointing a competent Board of Control that will control, and that will supersede the Government itself so far as controlling expenditure is concerned.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: What about the Auditor General who is supposed to watch over the faithful payment of the moneys appropriated by Parliament for certain objects?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Precisely, but that is just where the curse is; he watches over the appropriations, but the curse lies in the appropriations. Look at the present Supply Bills which are being brought down this Session, and about which I hope we will have something to say hereafter. The curse lies in the appropriations that are being made. The Government of the day is no protection to Canada as to expenditure. The Government is expected to make expenditures. The Government is expected to revel in expenditures, and if does not revel in expenditures it is subject to criticism.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: And the Auditor General makes his audit after the money is spent.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Precisely. The idea of relying on an audit for the purpose of controlling expenditure is like locking the door of the stable after the horse is stolen. No; what Canada to-day needs is one of the strongest and most influential Boards that could be appointed, of the most competent business men, that would have the most absolute authority to supervise all expenditure and to curtail appropriations that have been made. There is no reason, because appropriations are made, why the expenditures should follow the appropriations. Why, when we take into consideration that the House of Commons is made up of 235 members, I think, the paramount duty of those members being to secure expenditures from the Government—all banded together as a legion in importuning and bringing the strongest pressure to bear on the Government that the most reckless expenditures should be made in their constituencies—how in the world can Canada cease from becoming overwhelmed by debt unless we provide machinery to prevent that kind of thing going on?

The Ministers cannot prevent it. The Ministers, if they are going to occupy a popular position in the country, must necessarily bow their necks to the yoke that is placed upon them by the members who want the expenditure. So there is no brake placed upon the expenditure. I suggest to my honourable friend that he should give some thought to that, and I venture to say that if we had a Board of Control in Canada, with ample power to control expenditure, we could save millions and millions annually.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: An example of that is right before our eyes in what has been done in the United States during the last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: And more so in England, and in France too.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: In England it has been in force for years; but last year, when President Harding came into the Administration, one of the first steps taken by him was to appoint a Board of Control to control appropriations. I am not going into detail with reference to it, but that Board has been functioning and doing its work now for over twelve months. It has failed only once in preventing a Department from overlapping its recommendation. It has cut off appropriations by tens and hundreds of millions of dollars, and in only one case was that overridden by the two