

Government resolutions and bills, to listen to the debates, and to read Hansard and the reports of committees. I am sure that if we as individuals will give attention and study to these matters, as I deem it our duty to do, our discussions in this Chamber will be freer and better, and our work more effective.

I make this statement so that our confrères on the other side may understand that the object of the members of our party in meeting yesterday was to try to arrange their affairs so that they might be better advised as to the activities of and the legislation coming from the other House, to the end that our activities should be of greater interest and usefulness.

Hon. C. C. BALLANTYNE: Honourable senators—

(Hon. Mr. Ballantyne, who was recently chosen Leader of the Conservative party in the Senate, was greeted with applause.)

Thank you all very much. I will say only this in reference to your kind, generous and unexpected applause, that you will find a very great difference between my leadership and that of my brilliant predecessor. To my honourable friends opposite I should like to express an assurance such as I gave to my own colleagues yesterday, that with their assistance I will do the very best I can. No one can do better than his best. And let me say once more that I greatly appreciate the kind applause you were good enough to give me.

I rose to say that I find myself fully in agreement with the remarks just made by the honourable leader of the House (Hon. Mr. King). The Senate of Canada was constituted for the purpose that he has outlined. But different Prime Ministers follow different policies in delegating to this House work that it is prepared and well able to do. I am speaking now of peace times. When Right Honourable R. B. Bennett was Prime Minister, the Senate had very few adjournments. As all honourable senators are aware, legislation can be initiated in this House as well as in the other. With no reflection upon the other House, of which I myself was once a member, I want to say this in favour of the Senate: that it is a non-political body, and legislation is handled here, not only on the floor of the House, but also in our committees, in a more efficient way than it is by our friends in another place. They must of necessity keep their eyes on political considerations, to a certain extent, as we need not do. I know that in war times we cannot expect that a large number of bills will be initiated in the Senate, most of them being

war measures. Nevertheless, some bills which are initiated in the Commons could just as well be dealt with here first, and we should be glad indeed to have them. I would say to my honourable friend the leader of the House that I hope he will continue to press the Prime Minister and the Government to expedite legislation in the other House so that it may reach us promptly. The public, having no proper understanding or appreciation of this Chamber, entertain the erroneous idea that the Senate is of little or no use. If they knew the facts they would certainly have an entirely different opinion. This misunderstanding would be cleared up if more legislation reached us. For the short time he has occupied his present position the acting leader has done extremely well in his efforts to effect an improvement, and I would urge him to continue to work to this end.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. A. D. McRAE: Honourable senators, I concur in the remarks of the honourable acting leader of the House (Hon. Mr. King). There are many people throughout Canada who feel that this House should busy itself in inquiring into and considering the problems which will surely face the country when the war is over. This would be purely a non-political effort.

In this connection I have in mind what was done by what I may term a self-appointed committee of members from both sides of the House when, a few years ago, as some honourable senators will recall, we gathered at luncheon once a week or so and discussed things which we thought we might bring before the Senate, and we would agree among ourselves who should lead off and how the discussion should develop. I remember one case in which our work would seem to have been of considerable value. I refer to our discussion of electoral reform. Our discussion was extensive and informative, and to me at least it was gratifying to know that when the subject was dealt with in the other House frequent reference was made to our work. Undoubtedly what we had done was helpful to members of the Commons.

Honourable members who took part in that effort to bring forward things of material interest and importance to the country will recollect that over a period of two years we discussed several other matters, and I think we did useful work. That activity died what I may call a natural death. I was told by some of the senior senators that it languished because of our becoming a little more complacent and not so impatient.

However, we are now living in very difficult times. Our post-war problems will be