

Senate and which will be dealt with when it reaches here. If hon. members are agreeable, I should like to move:

That the present sitting of the house be continued after six o'clock until motion is made for adjournment.

This motion if carried will permit the present discussion if it does not last too long to run on until it is concluded. If it continues too long we may adjourn at any moment. If the debate is concluded in time to arrange for prorogation at a later hour this evening, the definite hour of prorogation could then be given. I infer that the house will consent to this motion. If there is unanimous consent I should like to present the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I thank the hon. member for Lethbridge very much.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I have been dealing principally with the debt situation in the world. There are many other figures which might be quoted, to which I shall not now refer. I believe that every hon. member has been disturbed to the depth of his being by the mounting debt in Canada. Alberta means to pay her debts. Please accept my sincere assurance on this point.

What has she done to prove it? She has been strictly scrutinizing her affairs for upwards of twenty years. She has learned, therefore, much about what she can and what she cannot pay. In 1921 she elected a United Farmers of Alberta government pledged to get her out of debt. That was the specific pledge, Mr. Speaker—to get the province out of debt. Honestly and effectively, I think it can safely be said, the administration of that day struggled with their problem. Sternly resolved to take no chances, Alberta returned them term after term. The record of that determined effort is well set forth in pages 12 to 26 of the report. During the depression debts again began to mount. Anxiety about this fact contributed greatly to the sweeping return of the Social Credit party on August 22, 1935. Mr. Aberhart constantly repeated, "You cannot borrow yourselves out of debt." Now what has the Social Credit government done since going in? In the first place let me indicate a little more definitely than I have done so far, the situation they had to face, and let me show what they have done in that situation. I quote from the bank report at page 27:

The situation which developed in 1935 made it impossible for Alberta to borrow in the public market. As a result it became necessary to provide for all current and capital expenditures from the province's own resources.

31111—185½

Mr. Aberhart said, over and over again, that when he came into power he found the treasury empty; indeed, not only empty but with the bottom scraped out of it. His vigorous way of putting it was not an exaggeration. The point to remember is that he was there; the debts were there; the condition was there; the province was there, faced with the worst crop failure it had ever known, stretching from the north to the south boundary. He could not escape. What could he do? There were two disastrous years; it is only fair to bear that in mind. In 1935 we were rained on and flooded out in the Peace river area, we were burned out in the south, and hailed and frozen out all through the centre. The result was that there was scarcely a provincial riding in Alberta in the fall of 1935, when the new government took the reins of office, that did not come pleading for assistance. Constituencies that had never known what it was to ask for assistance now had to have it, and this only added to the stringency of the situation. In addition to that we may justly complain of something which in my opinion, when the history of these times is written, will stand out as a reflection upon the justice of the press of this land. For we were constantly subjected to opposition from the press, propaganda, whispering campaigns, and definite antagonism on the part of the big interests—all of which, in my judgment, is an utter disgrace. I do not believe there has ever been a time in the history of the country, when, a year and a half after the election of a new group to office, there were still newspapers from one end of the country to the other, directly, persistently, and malignantly attacking the administration, no matter whether it had a record of probity and honour and efficiency or not. And that thing, sir, is going on to-day. It weakened from the beginning the chances of the province to help itself.

This bears on the situation which I am presenting to the house to-day. What efforts did the province make? In the first place Mr. R. J. Magor was brought in. As I understand it, he was chosen because he was an expert in orthodox finance. His task was to reveal to the new administration exactly the state of the provincial finances, and I should not be surprised if much of the fulness and completeness of this report of the bank was made possible by the good work of Mr. Magor. He was kept there until his work was complete. The result was that we found out exactly how we stood. And that is the first thing that any government could do under the circumstances, is it not? Mr. Aberhart declared from the beginning that he would have a balanced budget. What group could ask for any more?