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Beauharnois Debate Concluded In Senate

Liberal Senator Lays Blame On "System" For Actions Of Haydon And MacDougald. And Recommends Senate Reform.

OTTAWA, Ont., May 4 (By The Canadian Press)—Reform of the Senate along drastic lines was suggested in the Upper House Tuesday by Senator J. J. Hughes. Upon appointment, Senators, under his leadership, would sever their professional business connections and devote themselves to politics. Parliamentary inquiries and Commission investigations would be conducted by the Senate as a whole. The whole complexion would be changed to a semi-judicial body. Senator Hughes continued the debate on the Beauharnois report. He stated that it appeared to be a semi-judicial body. He said Mr. Hughes, was that if the Senate continued had broken the law of the land, or violated the constitution, they would have to suffer the consequences. But, if they had not done so, to inflict punishment on them would be the greatest injustice ever done. If they had not done so, to inflict punishment on them would be the greatest injustice ever done. If they had not done so, to inflict punishment on them would be the greatest injustice ever done.

by the system, and legalized under it.

At a time of such great economic stress, when the people were facing grave serious problems, Parliament would be better employed than in tearing its members tooth and claw, Senator Hughes said. Why should these three men be singled out as victims, when the system was wrong? To set the world right was too big a job for the Senate of Canada, but its mite could be contributed by "putting our own House in order." Reform of the Senate, he believed, was overdue. It was no reflection upon the Fathers of Confederation to say that the instrument fashioned by them had outlived its usefulness in certain particulars. The Senate itself was the body which should bring out this reform.

The judiciary in Canada held the confidence and respect of the Senate, proceeded Mr. Hughes. Would it not be possible to have conferred upon the Senate more of the powers and responsibilities of the judiciary. If this were done, great care would necessarily have to be taken in appointing men to the Senate. He felt that the two leaders now in the Senate would be ornaments to any judicial body. Members would be required to give up all connection with party politics.

Also, members of the Senate would be required to give up their business and industrial affairs. The business of farming, suggested Senator Hughes, might be exempted, because there was no danger of anybody making money at farming. To such a body as he suggested might well be left all Parliamentary investigations, proceeded Senator Hughes. It might also perform the work now done by royal commissions. The work and qualifications required would necessitate payment of a suitable indemnity, but the honor of the position would induce many wealthy men to accept appointment. If the Beauharnois inquiry had the effect of bringing about this measure of Senate reform, he felt that it would not have been in vain.

A great deal of complaint had been made that Liberal Senators on the committee had not been given an opportunity to consider the report and suggested amendments to it, said Senator A. B. Gillis. This complaint, he proceeded, was not justified. He fully agreed with the report, continued Senator Gillis, and he paid a tribute to the non-partisan attitude of Senator Tanner, chairman of the committee. Senator George P. Graham had paid a great tribute to Senator Haydon. He believed, the speaker said, that Senator Haydon was much the same as other "average citizens" excepting for his connection with Beauharnois. He also believed that Senator Dandurand had not displayed very much enthusiasm in the speech which he had made in defence of his colleagues.

The House of Commons committee had presented a unanimous report, while a resolution had been passed by the committee extending a vote of thanks to the chairman of that body, Hon. W. A. Gordon, continued Mr. Gillis. "May I have a word on that?" enquired Senator MacArthur. "We'll allow you all the time you want," said Mr. Gillis. Senator MacArthur proceeded to say that dissent from the House of Commons report had been expressed and that it was not unanimous. "What you say is not true," Senator Gillis declared. "It is outside the facts."

There were cries of "order" and Mr. Speaker Blondin intervened to inform Senator Gillis that the term was "improper."

He challenged Senator Robinson's complaint as to the treatment the Senate committee had received. As to its being a one man committee, that may have been true, but the only thing to which Mr. Robinson would have agreed would have been a whitewash. Senator Gillis upbraided both Senator Haydon and Senator MacDougald and urged the House so to act that it would retain the respect of the country.

The record showed that the House of Commons report was not concurred in by all the members of the committee, declared Senator J. H. King. A number of the Liberal Senators who had already spoken were members of the Senate's committee. They had not only read the evidence but had heard it, and they did not hesitate to assert in clear and definite terms why they would not be parties to the report. Senator King declared he had been a member of the administration which, in 1926, had granted the approval of Beauharnois plans.

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