

Hon. W. B. ROSS: Honourable gentlemen: It is my pleasant duty to congratulate the mover and the seconder of this Address on discharging very neatly, and I think very well, a more than ordinarily difficult task; because, so far as I have been able to struggle with the Speech from the Throne, it is one of the hardest to get hold of, because it contains the least material of any such Speech as it has been my good fortune to read for some time. However, these gentlemen have done very well in making bricks without straw, and I must congratulate them on both the manner and the substance of their remarks.

I wish also to congratulate the other members of the House on the new members who have entered this Chamber, and I would like to make a few remarks to them, not for the purpose of delivering a homily on their duties, but rather in order to remind myself and other members of this House what is expected of us here. Those new members will find, what some of us learned years ago, the real facts as to the position of a Senator. Throughout the country it is commonly thought that a Senator comes here to do nothing but go to sleep and that nothing is being done in this Chamber. However, those gentlemen will learn, as we have, that any man who is going to take part in the proceedings of this House will have to give systematic and careful consideration to the matters that come before us here. The deliberations of the Senate are of the greatest benefit to the people of Canada in the way of avoiding trouble and reducing public expenditure.

This leads me directly to the subject which underlies a few of the matters referred to in the Speech from the Throne. Two or three of the paragraphs that are not merely retrospective are such as involve taxation; but I would urge upon the new members of this House that they should endeavour to take a somewhat judicial attitude upon the matters dealt with in the Senate. Those of us who have been here for any length of time have found that the old party spirit that was acquired in contested elections, and perhaps also somewhat in another House, is not quite the spirit that is expected of members of this House by the people of this country; and I think as time goes on it is more important for all of us to assume that judicial attitude and try to avoid injuring or spoiling legislation by importing into it anything like a bitter party spirit.

I would like to convey to the members of this House some thoughts with regard to taxation in the country. If we are going to build

Hon. Mr. LACASSE.

new railroads, or have embassies in foreign countries, or divide large sums of money among various provinces for such things as railroads and harbours, we must necessarily incur heavy taxation; and my view of this House is that perhaps its chief function, apart from the protection of provincial rights, is the duty of restraining the extravagant expenditure of public money in every branch of government.

It is perfectly true of all governments, particularly those that consist of one Chamber, that political parties vie with one another in public expenditures. Thus, if Party "A" votes several millions, with the expectation that they will be in favour with the populace, Party "B" will perhaps go five millions better. But in this House we should be above that sort of thing, as we have not the same temptation or reason for doing that which applies to popular representatives; and I would say that if we can in any way control everything even approaching extravagant expenditure on the part of the Government of the day, we will be doing a great public service for Canada.

Out of this question of public expenditure grow two other matters, namely, taxation and the cost of living. You cannot expect to go on spending millions and yet ignore the question of taxation; neither can you heap on taxes without increasing the cost of living. Following this problem around, it leads to another subject—that of immigration. Without undertaking to say to-day that the Government are blamable for any specific action in connection with immigration, I am perfectly certain that there is a public impression, whether correct or not, that there is something wrong about immigration. Though not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, I understand that it is whispered that there is to be a thorough investigation this Session of the whole subject of immigration. For myself, I have never been satisfied that we have worked on the proper lines with regard to immigration. One thing stands out in the conditions of our country, I think—that in the farming districts, with men of large families, it will be found, as a rule, that the sons of farmers do not desire to emigrate to foreign countries, but prefer to stay at home. I think that before spending money on immigration from Europe or any foreign country we ought to know decisively that we have exhausted our resources for retaining our own population on the land. That is my present view on this matter; but possibly the Government may try to justify itself in that respect. It is