

of my hon. friend (Mr. German) that I agreed with very heartily, and that was when he pointed out to the House that the election of a senator in a large district comprising three or four of our present districts would not be any more difficult nor any more expensive than the election of a senator in one of our present counties, and therefore I take it for granted that he is thoroughly in accord with the principles of proportional representation, as the question of expense is one of the great objections to the present system. Since I have been a member of this House, I have on many occasions heard this question, being brought up usually although not always by some one sitting in Opposition, and on most of those occasions hon. gentlemen who have brought the matter up have been thoroughly in earnest and honest about it, just as my hon. friend from Welland is to-day. But so far as I have been able to see, no scheme that has yet been recommended seems to appeal either to the House or to the country as being much better than the present system. I am not one of those who have favoured doing away with the Senate simply because on occasions it has gone diametrically opposite to the views expressed in this House. My hon. friend to-day suggests an elected Senate instead of an appointed one. In my opinion we would not be likely to get, by election, a Senate that would be less partisan than it is at present. You can not elect senators without having political organizations, and those organizations would be Liberal or Conservative and you would have your Senate composed of Liberals and Conservatives. In fact, I think the Senate would tend to be more partisan than it is at present, because under the prevailing system, when a man is appointed to the Senate, he is somewhat in the same position as a judge if he chooses to assume that position; he is not dependent on any organization, nor is he dependent on any party.

I quite agree with my hon. friend from Welland that the senators, even with their handicap of age, because they average considerably older than the members of this House, show up man for man to good advantage against the members of this House. I have frequently observed the manner in which they deal with legislation that comes before them. While all of the senators may not be skilled in legislative work, many of them are, having obtained their training in the local legislatures and in

[Mr. Turriff.]

this House, and taking them all around, they are, with, of course, some exceptions, able and good men and they do their work expeditiously and well.

Another objection that I would have to an elective Senate is the matter of cost. Although a senatorial election would not cost quite as much as an election to the House of Commons (because my hon. friend proposes a longer term for senators), the cost would be great and, in my judgment, the class of senators that would be secured by election would not be worth the extra expense. There is also a general feeling that in elections to municipal councils, local legislatures, and the House of Commons, the people have a sufficiency of elections.

I wish, however, to mention a couple of changes that I would like to see made in connection with the Senate. These are views that I have held for a good many years. A year or so prior to the election of 1911, when we on this side of the House had no thought whatever of being in Opposition so soon, I discussed this matter with the present leader of the Opposition. I have never brought the matter up since, simply because my hon. friends on the Government benches have been in the minority in the Senate. It is to the credit of the Fathers of Confederation that they arranged for a Senate in such a manner that so far we, their successors, have never been able to find any satisfactory method of changing it, but I think it was never their intention that the Senate should be so absolutely one-sided as it usually is. When the Liberals came into power in 1896, there were, if I remember aright, only between twelve and eighteen Liberal senators—a very small number—out of 84. Within five or six years the Liberals had a majority in the Senate, and when we went out of power in 1911, the Senate was practically as one-sided as when we came into power in 1896. That is not a satisfactory condition for the Senate to be in, and I do not think it was ever expected at the time of Confederation that the Senate would become so one-sided as I have described. Should the Government remain in power for another term or two, the Senate would again be absolutely one-sided. In 1910, in discussing the matter with my right hon. leader, I took up the question of whether it would not be advisable, when we came to form the western provinces into a senatorial district, as was done later on by my hon. friends opposite, to make a change and provide that thereafter the leader of the Op-