

Bills in its history—actually rejected them. A Conservative Senate did so, and no Senate can be more moderate in its views or more equitable in its opinions, judging from what we hear nowadays, than a Senate in which the Conservative party has a majority.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Hear, hear.

Hon. Sir GEO. ROSS—The Bill of 1874—I do not know whether it was justifiable or not, I am not going to discuss it on the merits—was thrown out. Sufficient for my purpose to say what occurred; it would be taking up too much time to discuss it. Another Bill was thrown out in 1899, and another in 1900. These three Bills were wholly kicked out of the doors for reasons which the Senate thought sufficient. I am not going to blame the members of the Senate. If it were an open question now, the facts of the case might be presented, to justify their action. I do not propose to do that, but what I do propose to say is that, if those redistribution Bills were rejected in this Senate for some good reason, this Senate in later days would not be very much to blame in repeating that action, if it were justified by the facts. I hope the facts would not warrant us in taking that course.

Then I notice in the Address that there is to be an increase in the Senate. We welcome any increase to this body, of men elected on proper grounds, who would bring to the Senate the qualities necessary to add to its dignity and influence. Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan are entitled under existing laws to an increase of two members. British Columbia is not entitled by any law or any power within this Parliament, to an increase. That is no reason why it should not get such increase, if it were submitted in a proper and constitutional manner. We would raise no objections on this side of the House to any increase of the Senate that is made on a constitutional basis. These are features of the Bill of which we greatly approve.

I notice also that it is intended to keep up the pressure, shall I say, of public opinion with regard to the improvements necessary in agriculture. I think it is of first-class importance to Canada that all the moneys we have to spare, and all the energy that can be brought to bear upon the question, and all the scientific skill of the greatest experts in agriculture, should be utilized at the present moment to increase the productivity of our soil, and to increase the supplies that go on the market, from time to time, to the consumer. It is rather a

Hon. Sir GEORGE ROSS.

curious thing, and it is not confined to Canada alone, that we have much fewer cattle in proportion to our population than we had ten years ago. Well, that means less competition; it means a more meagre supply of meat products; it necessarily means an increased price—and the same may be said of sheep and swine. We do not produce as much grain in Ontario as I think we should. Quebec does not yet grow enough wheat to feed its own people, nor do any of the Maritime provinces, except Prince Edward Island, produce sufficient wheat for home consumption. Along all those lines intensive agriculture, the term commonly used, should be so applied that this wonderful country of ours, rich as the Garden of Eden if properly attended to agriculturally, ought to produce a much larger surplus of food products than it does now. Orchards would yield more abundantly than they do now, if properly treated. Waste lands that are unproductive should be made productive. It is not the fault of the soil or climate, nor of nature's bounty, that these conditions exist. I think it is the call from the cities and towns, the inconsiderate views impressed by farmers themselves upon their sons, the race for social distinction, and what else I cannot wait to say, that is increasing abnormally our urban population, and reducing in the same proportion the rural population. Some countries have fewer on their farms than they had last census, and little towns have grown largely at the expense of those rural districts. How is that education to be brought about? I think great good is being done by our present system, but the harvest is plentiful while the labourers are few. The cost of labour is too high for the farmer, he says. There ought to be some means of distributing the large number of immigrants who come to this country into the rural districts. How it is going to be done I do not know. The Government has its officials, and its experts, and can work that problem out themselves. Without discussing the causes of the present reduced productiveness of our soil, and our cattle markets, it is evident that something ought to be done, and done as quickly as possible. I am pleased, then, to commend the Government for what they have done in agriculture, in promoting safety at sea, and in the general administration of those departments.

Now, the Speech from the Throne is to me remarkable, not so much for what it contains, as for what it does not contain.