

the country where I live—that a farmer going west, if he happened to be a Conservative, went to Manitoba or the North-west, while, if he happened to be a Liberal he went to Dakota or some of the other north-western states. From that I draw the conclusion that the farmers were influenced in this way by the kind of literature they read in their homes. And to-day we find that immigration agents are engaged in Dakota and Michigan, coaxing those people to come back to Canada. That is a fact which I gleaned from the report of the Minister of the Interior, in which he says :

A glance over the reports sent in from time to time by settlers and delegates will show that a large number of those who have moved to western Canada from the United States are ex-Canadians, people who have gone from Ontario and Quebec to the States some years ago, and who have failed to secure what they looked for, and now that they find the rich lands of western Canada being opened up for settlement, are anxious to return to their home-land under their own flag.

I will venture to say in regard to this 'Canada of ours, that no man who goes out of it to find a home elsewhere can better himself, and if he has tried that experiment, he is glad to return.

Now, I am one of those who think it was not an unmixed evil for this country when the Liberals came into power. I think it is a fair thing, in a country with institutions and governed like ours, with the electors divided into two great parties, that the legislation of the country should be divided between the parties, and that each party should come into power occasionally as the country demands it. Even though the policy of the party in power might do some harm, it is better to do with that harm than to have such discontent in the country as would breed sedition and disloyalty.

I think it was a good thing for the hon. member for Centre Toronto (Mr. Brock) to address the House in the interest of the manufacturers, and I was glad when the hon. member for South Ontario (Mr. Ross) began to talk about the farmers, because it is in the interest of the farmers that I intend to talk to-night. I do not intend to give the House any statistics; I simply want to talk in a general way about the farmers. I am closely in sympathy with the farmers; I have had a great deal to do with them all my life; I have lived among them; I have practiced my profession among them, and I know perhaps more about them than most of them know about themselves. I can say for the farmers that they are perhaps of all classes in this country the class who work the hardest and who perhaps get the smallest return from their hard labour. They enjoy less of the luxuries of life; they know less about the superfluous concerns of life: every day of their life is given to hard toil: and they are not so wealthy as most other classes. Of

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course, their wants are few, and perhaps for that reason there is less attention paid to them. But it must be remembered that they are the producers of the country, and a man in a country like this who produces something is worth a dozen men who are looking for office. The farmers of this country form about one-third of its population.

An hon. MEMBER. Fifty-two per cent.

Mr. VROOMAN. I was not aware that they formed so large a proportion; but that makes my argument all the stronger. And when they come to this House and petition the government by delegation or otherwise, I think they should receive the greatest consideration. While this is essentially an agricultural country, the province from which I come is par excellence the farming province of the Dominion, followed closely by the province of Manitoba. I represent a rural constituency composed to a great extent of farmers. We have one town of considerable size, with perhaps 7,000 people, where I live, and we have two or three incorporated villages. The farmers of that constituency as a class are well-to-do and intelligent people, who regularly read the papers, and are keenly alive to what takes place on the floor of this House.

As the province of Ontario is largely composed of farmers, we have had a number of reasons advanced by hon. gentlemen opposite to account for the way in which the government was turned down in that province. The hon. the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte) said it was because it was not properly organized, and that he was going up there to organize it. Well, that hon. gentleman has been absent some days, and it has occurred to me that perhaps he was up organizing in North Bruce. But judging by the result, I can assure him that he would do better to leave the organization of the Liberal party in the province of Ontario in the hands of the hon. member for North Oxford (Mr. Sutherland), who will do the work much better, because the people of Ontario do not want the Minister of Public Works up there. Another hon. gentleman said that if the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Bell) would look up the records, he would discover that there had been a gerrymander in 1881 and another in 1891. That seems to me to have been going a long way back to find a cause for the defeat of the Liberals in Ontario in the year 1900, especially when we consider the facts that in 1896 the Liberal party had been returned in that province by a considerable majority, and that the same constituencies which returned Liberals in 1896, rejected them in 1900. I do not think that any of the reasons given by the other side to account for the defeat of the Liberal party in Ontario are the true reasons. In my opinion if there