

make just this comment, that the whole question of the cattle trade between Canada and the Old Country rests, at the present time, upon this question of freight rates. I have no hesitation in saying that if the present rate continues, the traffic will dwindle and die, because farmers will soon get tired of raising cattle just to create freight for ocean steamships, just as they will soon get tired of raising grain in order to provide traffic for railways. There must be a reasonable profit for the man who is carrying on the work.

I was rather surprised when I read the seventh clause in the Speech from the Throne, dealing with the Senate. Some reference had been made to speeches delivered throughout the country during the recess; and from some speeches delivered by the Prime Minister we expected that something drastic was going to happen to the Senate at this session. But the language now in the Speech from the Throne is much more careful and guarded, and I am beginning to think that the Senate are getting more firmly placed in their seats and they are not likely to be disturbed, at least for some years to come. While I believe in a second chamber, my little experience in this House having led me to the conclusion that it is quite possible that ill-considered legislation may slip through and that some check is necessary, I think it is an anachronism to have a non-elective body, a body whose members are appointed for life, which can permanently defy the enactments of this House. Certainly some other system of carrying on the business of the country will eventually have to be adopted, and I hope this government will have the courage to tackle the question in the very near future.

We are promised some amendments to the Grain Act which will be a very important document, and we are also asked to deal with some trade agreements. These matters I will leave for discussion at a more opportune time.

We are told that the estimates are being prepared with extreme care and with economy kept always in mind. I do not mind expressing my opinion as regards the method in which the estimates come before this House. I have always felt, coming into this House as a layman, knowing nothing about the situation, that our method of criticising the estimates is very lame, the idea being to drag the information out of the minister, to get all we can out of him. I am not casting any blame on any particular member of the government, but it is evident very often that the least said the soonest mended and the minister, perhaps, sometimes knows just as much

about the subject—I say this quite candidly and not in any derogatory manner—as the member who asks for information. For instance, the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart) may have thousands of employees in his department and it is impossible that he should be familiar with all the work they are doing. The system is wrong and a better method should be devised whereby members can criticise the estimates more intelligently. Every year estimates are brought down for improvements all along the Atlantic coast. Probably we devote our energies to blocking something the blocking of which is an absolute necessity, yet at the same time we let some vote slip through that is not needed at all. That is not the proper way to do business. I hope the government will practise every possible economy, do no unnecessary work and do what is necessary in the most efficient manner. The country is impatient as regards taxation. We know that every government professes economy and every government, to some extent, practises extravagance. The sooner that sort of thing stops, the better.

I want to make just a few general observations in closing. Perhaps a better day is dawning for Canada and I am hopeful for the future. I know very well that we are not yet out of the woods; that we have many troubles to meet. The other evening I picked up a Scottish newspaper that a friend had sent me and I read a speech that had been delivered in the town of Berwick, which is neither in Scotland nor in England, but just between the two. This speech was delivered by an Alberta farmer who gave a most glowing account of conditions in Alberta and of what could be accomplished in the way of wheat growing. In fact, he pointed out that Canada, western Canada in particular, was a most desirable place to live in. He also made this statement which I hope will go abroad, that it was a paradise for women. The same evening, in discussing western conditions with a friend, I heard the story of people living on the prairies who were unable to secure the bare necessities of life. I have no doubt as to the truth of both of those statements. And that just explains how difficult it is for an easterner to get an accurate conception of conditions in western Canada. We have a good country and under proper conditions I can, without any hesitation, advise immigration into that country; but we want to see conditions made suitable for people who desire to earn an honest and decent living.

At the present time we hear a good deal about our natural resources and we sometimes get tired of the term. A section of the