

devolve upon the Second Chamber. There is another objection which I make to a Second Chamber, and it is this: I do not say that you will not get able men as its members, but I say that however honest and capable an Administration may be, it is impossible that it can constitute a Second Chamber possessing that versatility of character and thought which is necessary to give the Chamber influence in the country. It is not only necessary that a representative body should be composed of able men, but they should be men drawn from every variety of pursuit that exists in the country, in order that the country may have confidence and take an interest in its proceedings. We do not all take exactly the same view of public questions, but we view them from different standpoints. Our minds have been trained to particular avocations, our thoughts flow in particular channels, and we cannot divert them from that groove in which they have been habituated to run. It is therefore necessary that we have men who have been accustomed to think differently, who from the difference of their avocations and positions will be brought to view public questions from different standpoints. Who are you likely to find composing the Second Chamber? Is it the artisan, the agriculturist, the lawyer of good standing? No! You get none of these. You find a few wealthy merchants and retired bankers and defeated politicians, and when you go behind this list you get nothing. I say that such a body, however capable its members may be, is altogether too narrow for the purpose of exerting any important influence upon the legislation of the country. A good Government, Sir, implies two things:—First, familiarity with the objects of Government, and, second, a knowledge of the means to be employed. I do not believe that the Second Chamber is possessed of either of these qualities. There cannot be a proper knowledge of the means to be employed unless the members are brought in contact with the people of the country in some way or other, and, where they stand completely isolated as they do, they are disqualified by that isolation from possessing the necessary qualification. I was told, Sir, last year by a gentleman occupying a prominent position on that side of the House that this is a hobby of mine. But I

suppose every measure submitted to this House that has occupied the attention of the party who submits it, and who had seriously considered it, may be called his hobby. I don't think it is necessary to wait for some great calamity to burst upon the nation before we propose to apply a practical remedy to obvious defects. I am of opinion that Government partakes of the elements of an exact science. I believe it is possible to anticipate mischief, and to study the geography of politics in such a manner as to determine with a very considerable degree of accuracy to what particular point any particular measure is likely to lead. I do not think it is necessary we should have a practical experience of very serious defects before it is wise in us to undertake to apply a remedy. I am aware that in the estimation of certain classes of politicians, gentlemen who call themselves practical politicians, but who, in my opinion, are not entitled to that appellation, if you can urge a reason for a particular line of conduct, it is sufficient to justify its rejection as a mere theory. Well, Sir, we have been told by these eminently practical politicians that this second Chamber is to be a check on hasty legislation. It has been tried in this country for a great many years. Has it ever served that purpose? Who does not know that during the closing days of the session as many as fifty Bills has been passed through that House at a single session. Is that acting as a check on hasty legislation? Then we are told that it is to serve as a check against encroachments on the rights and functions of the Local Legislatures; and that would be very important work if it was performed by the second Chamber. Did it serve that purpose? If a second Chamber is to serve that purpose it must derive its authority from the Local Legislatures. Then we are told that the second Chamber is to serve as a Court of Review. When did it ever serve that purpose? What Bill possessing serious defects, improperly and ungrammatically drawn which had ever passed this House, has ever been properly corrected by the other Chamber? I have never seen such a Bill. The hon. member for Quebec Centre, who has returned from the place of the spirits of old politicians, may be able to tell us something in respect to this matter;

*Mr. Mills.*