

rica Acts 1867 to 1915, and this Act may be cited together as the British North America Acts 1867 to 1917.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise, for many reasons with a great degree of diffidence, in an endeavour to explain to the House some reasons why this resolution should be adopted. One reason for my diffidence is that there may be a fair ground for many hon. gentlemen to doubt the sincerity of one who moves a resolution to change the system of constituting the Senate of Canada. I have noticed that on practically every occasion since Confederation when any one dissented from the present system of constituting the Senate as constituted, it was always some person or some party that was in Opposition. I cannot recall any instance of a government or any member supporting a government moving a resolution to alter the system of constituting the Senate.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: MacIntyre, in 1907.

Mr. GERMAN: I had forgotten him for the moment. He certainly was a supporter of the Government at that time, but evidently his resolution did not receive much support or was not pressed energetically, because it came to nothing. Notwithstanding the fact that one of the planks of the Liberal platform in 1893 was the reform of the Senate, during the whole fifteen years the Liberal party were in power, there was no reform of the Senate other than through the efforts of Divine Providence. No action along that line was taken by the Government or by any member supporting the Government, with the exception of Mr. MacIntyre. Consequently, rising now as I do on the Opposition side of the House, after having for fifteen years supported a Government and a party that was in a measure pledged to reform the Senate, but which had said nothing about it when they were in power, some one may say: I doubt his sincerity in moving this resolution. But, Mr. Speaker, whatever may have been done or left undone in the past, whether the Liberal party or the Conservative party should have changed the system of constituting the Senate, one thing is certain, and that is, that there has been no change, and further, if such a change is necessary, that change should be made now notwithstanding any dereliction in either side in the past. I think myself that a change should be made; not a reform of the Senate—the resolution I am moving does not propose to reform the Senate as at

[Mr. German.]

present constituted—but a reform of the system of constituting the Senate in the future.

At the time of Confederation it was decided that the members of the Senate should be appointed by the Government. Outside of that, a democratic form of government was established, but in that one respect there was engrafted on the democratic tree a sprig of aristocracy which was doomed from the beginning, in my opinion, to be barren of any useful fruit, as has been proved. I have no fault to find with the senators. To my mind, Hon. George Brown was the Father of Confederation more than any other man living in Canada at that time. Great credit has been given to Sir John A. Macdonald for establishing the Confederation of the British North American colonies, and great credit is undoubtedly due him, but to my mind the man to whom more than any other credit is due is George Brown, for without him Confederation could not and would not have been established. He was the man who moved for the appointment of the committee of members of the legislature of Canada who composed the Quebec conference. He was the man who from first to last began the agitation and carried it through to a successful conclusion, and as a humble follower of that great Canadian I have pleasure in giving to him what I believe to be the meed of praise to which he is entitled, namely, of being above all others the Father of the confederation of the British North American colonies which form at the present time the great Dominion of Canada. Speaking of the Upper Chamber, George Brown said:

The desire was to render the Upper House a thoroughly independent body, one that could be in the best position to canvass dispassionately the measures of this House, and stand up for the public interest in opposition to hasty or partisan legislation.

The object was to have an independent body of judicially-minded men who would be free of all political influences. I am free to say that from Confederation down to the present hour the gentlemen who have been appointed to the Senate have been of the highest class of Canadians. In legislative ability, in business acumen, and in every other quality that goes to make up an excellent citizen, the senators not only compare favourably with the members of this Chamber, but, in some cases, in ability and financial position, they are our superiors, and would, if they were members of this Chamber, be an ornament to the Do-