

*Senate Role in Parliamentary System*

mittee to study the Senate and all other governing bodies in Canada. Prince Edward Island has four members in the House of Commons and 32 members in its provincial legislature.

I agree with the last speaker that the Senate has done much to help this great country of ours and has brought us through many rough times and situations. But perhaps it should be changed or reconstructed. Perhaps the whole system of governing Canada should be changed or reconstructed in some way.

The province of Manitoba has less than one million people but it has 57 members in the legislature, six in the Senate and 13 in the House of Commons. It is a great province and will be celebrating its centennial this year, but I wonder if it has not too much government.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Let's start by removing the Senators.

**Mr. Whicher:** My hon. friend says we should start by removing the Senators, but he does not say that in his resolution. As I read it, he suggests there should be a committee to examine the role of the Senate within Parliament. Perhaps the Senate should be eliminated. Perhaps my hon. friend's seat should be eliminated. I do not know about that; but there is too much government here, it should be investigated by a committee and something should be done about it.

It is not my intention to take up further time, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, for a country of 21 million people to have 634 members of the various legislatures, 102 members of the Senate and 264 members of the House of Commons apart from all the municipalities, etc., is simply too much government. I would, therefore, support my hon. friend's motion that a committee be set up to investigate the role of the Senate. At the same time, I suggest that the committee's terms of reference be enlarged to investigate the role of other governing bodies in Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

● (5:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with much interest to the mover of this motion and I was surprised at the comments of the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. LeBlanc). In fact, perhaps I paid more attention to him than to the mover because, first of all, he spoke in French and he brought up something new.

As for the mover, since we already knew his position concerning the Senate, there was nothing unexpected in his remarks.

The hon. member for Rimouski surprised us a bit and much as I esteem him, I do not agree with some of the views he expressed. I would like to see opposition members show to an increasing degree the same open-mindedness as the hon. member for Rimouski.

I feel I should stress the fact that the mover of this motion has shown that he sincerely wished to improve the role of the Senate, and it is his privilege.

The motion itself is divided in three parts. First, it should be recognized that the Senate raises a problem which requires consideration. In the second place, if it must be established whether the Senate should be abolished, improved or modernized, the members should be informed through the findings of a committee.

In my opinion, the mover does not impose his views on the house, but rather expresses a worthwhile opinion, because it is obvious that the Canadian people are not satisfied with the Senate, and they would like that body to be more efficient, whatever its future might be.

I agree with the hon. member for Rimouski that the older people deserve our respect and I felt involved when he mentioned the old and the young. We, younger people, may be full of enthusiasm, but we must recognize that those who are no longer young have experience.

Although I am in agreement with the principle set forth by the hon. member for Rimouski, I must point out that appointments to the Senate are the result of political favours. Under any government, when an individual has served the party well, or when it is deemed advisable to get rid of a member who creates problems for the party, he is appointed to the Senate.

We are expecting appointments to the Senate in the near future, as there are several vacancies there. And once again it will be seen that appointments to the Senate are used as a reward for services rendered more to a political party than to Canada.

What is wrong with the Senate is that Canadians have no say in the matter of appointments. Secondly, Canadians have no say insofar as the fixing of their emoluments is concerned.

Thirdly, Canadians get no report regarding the business of the Senate.