

At the outset of my remarks, I said that I support most changes which Senator Langlois approved among those proposed by Senator Croll. Let me list a few, including, for instance, representation in this house from the Northwest Territories and Yukon as well as a larger representation from western provinces, as advocated also in the report of the Joint Committee on the Constitution. I would also approve increased representation from various political parties and minority cultural groups, as well as the setting up of a Senate standing committee on Canadian affairs.

I agree with the joint committee's other suggestion that the Senate might deal with more bills and inquiries and that it might, in a way, serve as an agent between the people and the government on contentious issues. I would also endorse the abolition of restrictions imposed on Quebec senators, the abolition of the 30-year age limit and the abolition of requirements relating to property qualifications.

Finally, I also agree with the principle that the Prime Minister might consult the leader of the federal opposition or premiers of provinces or specific ethnic groups before making his final selection of Senate candidates.

I am somewhat cautious about the concept of changing the Senate into a house of provinces, in a similar way as the West German Bundesrat, a concept that was put forward by political expert E. D. Briggs—whom you undoubtedly know—as a means of rehabilitating the Canadian Senate. I leave to my elders in this house the duty of discussing that matter.

However, I think in summary that considerations that are essential to any attempt at reform, listed in 1963 by famous professor Robert Mackay in his book entitled *The Unreformed Senate*—which was revised in co-operation with Senator Croll—are still quite the same.

Those considerations are the following: First, that the assembly of senators better reflect the trends of public views in this country; second, that the Senate carry some degree of representation if it is to have the moral authority necessary to draw respect and attention across the country; third, that its autonomy be preserved and if possible strengthened; fourth, that the reform not be drastic enough to prejudice the efficient operation of parliamentary government as it has developed in Canada.

According to those esteemed colleagues who spoke before me in this debate, it seems that some of Senator Croll's 12 recommendations would considerably upset the mechanisms of our parliamentary system.

Professor Mackay was no doubt thinking about those possible upsets when he wrote ten years ago:

Canadian authorities can continue to consider it surer and easier to leave again that problem unsolved, as is the case with several other political problems.

Still according to him, I conclude by suggesting that the Senate, if it were given the opportunity, could certainly play a more dynamic and useful part in Canada's political life. But I join with the authors of the report of the Joint Committee on the Constitution in saying:

If Canadian governments in the past have paid only lip service to Senate reform, the Senate itself in recent times has made great efforts to improve itself.

[Hon. Miss Lapointe.]

Personally I have but one more wish to make: that it continue in that direction, spurred first by the awakeners who sit in this house.

[English]

Hon. Edward M. Lawson: Honourable senators, in adding the views of an Independent in this chamber on Senate reform, my remarks will be somewhat shortened because of the excellent presentation we have just heard. However, I do want to comment, because this is one of the few occasions on which the call for Senate reform has a valid base. It is a call by one of our fellow senators.

I have been concerned about a tendency in this chamber always to be on the defensive, to allow ourselves to be intimidated, almost, by members of the other place, and by people throughout the country from time to time, who consider that if there is nothing else newsworthy then ideally they can take a shot at abolishing the Senate, or kicking the Senate.

With that in mind, I am pleased to pay my respects to Senator Croll for raising this issue so that we can make an objective analysis here. Having said that kind thing about Senator Croll, I hasten to take issue with some of the points he made.

First, I do not agree with the suspensive veto. It seems to me that before we hurry to change the power of veto that we have, we must agree it should be only as a result of abuse by this chamber in exercising it. Surely, if there is any criticism it is that it has been exercised too few times, not too often. It has never been abused, and, in my view, a suspensive veto would simply weaken the effectiveness of this chamber. Surely it is far better to have something with meaning and substance that we can use when the situation is so desperate as to demand its use, then it would be to have a suspensive veto that, in my view, would be a meaningless thing and would have a tendency to weaken our relationship as a part of the parliamentary system.

Senator Croll's second point about additional distribution of senators and greater representation from the West has already been commented on adequately. I support that as being of considerable merit.

The third point that Senator Croll made, that the supporters of any one political party should not comprise more than two-thirds of the membership of the Senate at any one time, has merit. One of the things desperately needed here is to have at least this side of the chamber loaded with more Conservatives, or more Opposition members. I think there should be more balance. That greater balance in the house would make for a better discharge of our duties in the committees, for the quality of debate, and for the working and effectiveness of the Senate. So certainly I endorse the proposal to have more Opposition members—either Conservatives or members of any other party. I should be more careful, and not say the Senate should be "loaded with more Conservatives."

I am not sure that I totally agree with Senator Croll on the question of a compulsory retirement age. We could have retirement at 70 years of age, but that should be optional, with mandatory retirement at 75.

I do not agree with the suggestion that to be named to any position, such as that of leader or chairman of a