

so often touches the personal rights and interests of the people, the demands we hear put forward on sectional grounds from time to time would assume more weight and might constitute a much greater menace were there not the Upper House.

With this brief and wholly inadequate explanation of the reasons founding the creation of the Senate and some of those bearing upon the need for its continuance as an integral part of our parliamentary system, perhaps I might pass to some observations as to how the Senate does its work. To-day you will find amongst its membership many men with long experience in Parliament and a good number who have served in federal and provincial cabinets. Others have been leaders in various fields in private life—labour, farming, business and the professions, including the army. I can assert with confidence that to-day's Senate membership constitutes a very real representation of the various occupational, racial and economic characteristics of the Canadian people. Occasionally one hears the Senate referred to as an assemblage of "old fogies" or "the haven of 'worn-out politicians'". Let me state that such a conception of the membership of the Upper House could not be further from the truth. As a young man and one who does not regard himself either as "an old fogie" or a "worn-out politician," the first impression which I received on entering the Senate was the high standard of experience and business and political intelligence of the men with whom I found myself associated. Of course, there are some Senators who are in the evening of life. All of them are older than I, but, speaking as I now am to an assembly of persons born mostly in the twentieth century, I think that you will agree with me that without the wisdom which comes of long years of experience, leadership in Canadian government might be expected to follow a rather uncertain and perilous course. In times of stress and of national emergency, I will take, any day, the legislative sagacity of the wrinkled and white-thatched brow in preference to the inexperienced and sometimes reckless self-assurance of youth. Certainly, let us have more younger men in government, but let us also retain the tempering influence of the older statesmen.

Notwithstanding that the Senate has vested in it co-extensive authority with the House of Commons regarding the initiation of legislation—excepting any bill resulting in a tax—most Acts of Parliament start in the Lower House and get second treatment in the Senate. For this reason, our Chamber frequently has nothing before it in the early stages of the session and is obliged to take many adjournments. In the later stages it puts in a great deal of intensive work, both in full session and in committees, considering and revising a rush of legislation from the Lower House. Unhappily, the public is not really alive to the very considerable volume of work which is done by the Senate. Unlike the House of Commons, very few bills are considered in Committee of the Whole House but are referred to one or other of the special standing committees for consideration. This committee work is of a highly prosaic nature and does not furnish much meat for the gentlemen of the press. Consequently, it does not get into print. In the result, the Senate gets little or no credit from the Canadian people for the long hours of drudgery which its members undertake in hearing evidence and in re-

viewing and recommending amendments with regard to bills which come before the committees. For instance, very few people know that during the session of Parliament which was adjourned last August the Senate effected amendments to some fourteen bills coming from the House of Commons. Some of these changes were important; others less so, but it is clear, even from this recent experience that there is need in our parliamentary system for a body of review and revision. How many Canadians are aware of the fact that the Senate in the past has effected numerous and substantial savings to the taxpayers of this country by rejecting legislation which originated in the Lower House? In this connection, not long ago, I found an interesting statement by the late Senator Charles Murphy, made in the course of a debate referring to the work of the Senate. It was not by any means an exhaustive review of the record of the Upper House, but, by mention of only some ten bills which had been rejected or amended by the Senate, having to do with the appropriation of moneys for public works, the construction of railways and similar undertakings, he was able to show that the taxpayers of Canada had been saved in excess of one hundred million dollars. There are people in this country who to-day complain that an annual expenditure of some five hundred and fifty thousand dollars required to maintain the Senate is not justified. If a comparable proposal were made to save the expense of maintaining our courts of justice, it could expect to receive no public support. Yet, in reviewing and revising federal legislation at its source, the work of the Senate in protecting the rights and liberties of our people can be regarded to be equally as important as the function of administering the criminal and civil law of the land.

The wide experience of the senators of which I have spoken and their ability to take a detached view results in many improvements in the detail of the legislation as well as, occasionally, some important changes in principle. Many members of the Senate, myself included, would like to see more legislation introduced in the Upper House so that there would be a better balance of work between the two houses with a consequent possible shortening of the very lengthy sessions which recently have been the rule. For various reasons, however, governments seem to prefer to get the bills through the House of Commons first and, as I have said, this not infrequently results in leaving the Senate with nothing to do. Especially in time of war, the responsibility for formulating legislative policy must rest almost exclusively with the executive, that is, the Cabinet. As all of the Ministers, with one exception (and he without portfolio) have their seats in the House of Commons, it is natural that the situation which I have just mentioned is aggravated under existing conditions.

Now, even apart from the fact that Bills usually go to the Commons first and often move slowly to the Senate, it is to be expected that the Upper House will not spend as much time in session as will the House of Commons. In this connection it is important to remember that there are only 96 Senators at the most, and there are 245 members of the House of Commons. Naturally, 245 persons are bound to do a whole lot more talking than 96. The members of the Commons, moreover, represent the people directly and they are charged by their constituents with the special responsibility of airing their complaints and suggestions.