

If there were 144 seats in the new elected Senate, as we recommend, this phasing in of elected senators would require the removal of fewer appointed senators in the early stages than if there were fewer seats. This figure of 144 is 40 more than the present number of seats, so that only 8 vacancies would be required to make way for the 48 senators who would join the Senate after the first election. These vacancies could arise through natural attrition, or by shortening the nine-year term of some new appointments. For the second election, three years later, 48 vacancies would be required, and a further 48 would be needed six years after the date of the first election. In the event that there were too many vacancies, we favour short-term appointments to fill them. Those appointed would not be eligible for subsequent election to the Senate.

We see some advantage in the second of the two alternatives — the phasing in of direct elections. We believe that the Senate could benefit considerably during the transition period from having a number of members who had already served for some time and who could continue to bring their experience to the chamber's deliberations.

The question may be asked: if a system of direct election is not established, should the term of those senators who have already been appointed for life or to age 75 be shortened? We believe that this question should be addressed if and when it becomes clear that an elected Senate is unlikely to be put in place. It may, however, be noted that the turnover of membership in the Senate has been fairly rapid. From 1970 to 1980, for example, 59 per cent of the seats in the Senate became vacant. This would suggest that not many years would elapse before most senators had been appointed for nine-year terms.