

Retirement Age for Senators

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Colin Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take part in this debate myself but my hon. friend from Halifax (Mr. Regan) seems to have left the final touch of confusion exemplifying, I suppose, the confusion of the Liberal Party and the confusion we have seen so often among members of the Government. He takes a more—I would not say high-principled—a more idealistic view of the Senate and its make-up than his colleague from Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart), who took a much more practical term view of the Senate, as a convenience which provides an area of manoeuvre for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Winch: Oh, he is a much mature gentleman.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): He did not try to make out any case, except in one or two weak spots in his argument, that there was any value to the Senate, and my hon. friend from Halifax suffered from the same complaint as the hon. Member for Antigonish-Guysborough, and that is their rancour against the N.D.P. party, which sometimes tends to becloud their objectivity.

Suggestions were again made this afternoon by the hon. Member for Halifax that opposition to the Senate from Members of my party is really envy and jealousy because none of us have been or are likely to be appointed to the Senate. I cannot speak for anybody else but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that my reason for opposing the Senate is not because I have not been offered a job there, because I would not want it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Well, the other day the young Liberals of B.C., as desperate as the pathetic young Liberals of Ontario who describe themselves as a sick organization, have now been reduced to the point that they started to spread rumours about my impending retirement. The local paper picked these rumours up, so I sent a letter to them to point out that my constituency, my party workers and I myself would decide when I am going to retire and not the moribund Liberal party; and I say moribund because it is completely moribund in B.C., only being in mere existence.

I wound up my letter by suggesting that their only hope was an appeal to my wife who hates Ottawa and loves Vancouver

[Mr. Regan.]

Island; and so, if for no other reason, I could not dare accept an appointment to the Senate because it would not relieve her exile here.

I have heard a strange divergency of views expressed on this question by Members of the Government party, not only divergent views on the value of this particular bill but divergent views on the purposes and meaning of the Senate itself. I was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Carleton (Mr. Francis) suggest that because civil servants are appointed, therefore this is an argument in favour of the appointment of members of a legislative body.

It struck me as an astonishing confusion, and one which is all too common in the ranks of the Liberal Party, a confusion between an administrative apparatus and a legislature, or a political government. Of course the argument that, because civil servants are appointed in this manner this is an argument for the appointment of a legislative body, is too absurd to waste too much time on, although I was disturbed that my hon. friend from Antigonish-Guysborough in some of his asides gave support to the ideas of the hon. Member for Carleton in spite of the fact that, as I say, the burden of his song is largely that the Senate is a useful political convenience which provides the Prime Minister of Canada with an area of manoeuvre, a political way of getting rid of the deadwood out of his Cabinet.

Mr. Stewart: May I ask the hon. Member a question?

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Certainly.

Mr. Stewart: I should like to ask the hon. gentleman if he does not realize that statutes are only a small part of the corpus of the law, and that law is made by executive personnel and even by judges in high courts?

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I cannot quite understand the question the hon. Member is asking. What does it mean?

Mr. Stewart: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Ask it again.

Mr. Stewart: May I develop my question, Mr. Speaker? The hon. gentleman has suggested that I argued that the N.D.P. has contended that appointed persons have no place in the legislative process, and he seems to imply that by a "legislative process" I meant only our parliamentary process. My question