

*Senate Reform*

many Hon. Members on this side of the House. Since at least 1968, Liberal Ministers and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) have said that once patriation was achieved, once we had the means to amend all parts of our Constitution in Canada, we might then turn our attention to national institutions. We can now amend all our Constitution here, Mr. Speaker, through the amending formula with its various procedures for different items of constitutional change. I feel that with the establishment of the Special Joint Committee on Senate Reform we are embarking on that second phase.

When I quoted from the notes the Hon. Member for Edmonton East circulated with Bill C-640, I referred to his view that our institutions should be more responsive. I think it is fair to say that this notion of responsiveness is closely connected to the desire of many to see the Senate's role in regional representation strengthened. In his article in "Policy Options" the Hon. Member wrote:

● (1450)

Unless steps are taken to provide the regions and provinces with a more meaningful input and role in the institutions of the central Government, there is every indication that national unity will be increasingly threatened.

It is no exaggeration to say, Mr. Speaker, that these words strike a cord among many of those who have been looking at Senate reform in the past few years. The Canada West Foundation examined how the Senate might better speak for the regions in its 1981 report entitled "Regional Representation". All the details of their proposed reform may not find favour with everyone, but I encourage Hon. Members to consider the analysis in this very interesting report. The former Secretary to the Cabinet, Gordon Robertson, has written about Senate reform on several occasions. He is very concerned about regional representation in national institutions, as was evident in a speech he made in Quebec City only a month ago when he said:

In Canada . . . our regional differences are unusually wide and deep. They require to be effectively represented, voiced and discussed as a part of the operation of our central governing structure.

It is clear that this concern about regional representation in Parliament is shared by the Government. The Special Joint Committee's terms of reference make this very clear. That Committee has been asked:

To consider and report upon ways by which the Senate of Canada could be reformed in order to strengthen its role in representing people from all regions of Canada and to enhance the authority of Parliament to speak and act on behalf of Canadians in all parts of the country;

So, Mr. Speaker, it is plain that the Hon. Member is far from a lone voice calling for a serious examination of regional representation in the other place. Rather, he is one among a growing number who feel that the Senate should, through some kind of reform, be better able to speak on behalf of the various regions of this country. This theme of regional representation is evident in Bill C-640 which allocates 30 Senators to each of five regions, even though direct representation of the Provinces is also included.

While I feel the Hon. Member should be given a great deal of credit for this Bill, some parts of it puzzle me. In the

remainder of my remarks I would like to raise a few questions. Others may wish to comment on some of these points later in the debate. The Bill's sponsor may himself think about some of them if he plans to develop further his ideas on Senate reform. I understand from listening to him, and I think it is to his credit, that he is prepared to keep an open mind and develop this very important question and policy as he goes.

First of all, I must ask why a Senate of 150 Members is proposed. At present, there are 104 seats in the other place.

**Mr. McGrath:** One hundred and six.

**Mr. MacLellan:** One hundred and six.

**Mr. McGrath:** Six from Newfoundland.

**Mr. McKinnon:** The same as B.C.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Well, 104, 106, but in that general framework.

**Mr. McGrath:** There was 100; is that right?

**Mr. MacLellan:** There was 100. Therefore, why increase its size by almost 50 per cent? Other proposals in recent years have raised the total membership somewhat as well. The Goldenberg-Lamontagne Committee report proposed 126 seats; Bill C-60 suggested 188; others, however, like the Pepin-Robarts task force, suggested a smaller Senate of around 60 members. It is useful to make some comparisons with second Chambers in other federal countries. The American Senate, for example, has 100 members. In Australia, there are 64 Senators, and in the Federal Republic of Germany there are only 45 members in the federal second Chamber, the Bundesrat. I offer this only as a thought, but I wonder whether Canadians would readily accept such an increase in the size of the Senate, especially when this House is to increase by 28 Members after redistribution.

I would also like to comment on the Bill's provision, namely Clause 10, for Senators to have their terms reconfirmed on the basis of a so-called non-partisan campaign. That Clause reads as follows:

A Senator campaigning for reconfirmation shall do so on a non-partisan basis, identifying with no official political party represented in the House of Commons but identifying only with the role and performance of the Senate of Canada.

In the report he prepared last December, the Hon. Member explained the purpose of this Clause, namely to remove the process of reconfirmation from the realm of partisan politics as much as possible. Senators seeking reconfirmation would not be able to fall back on their Party affiliation. They would be compelled to campaign exclusively on their "record of achievement" in terms of legislative review or regional representation.

Now, if I might say so, this sounds rather unidealistic, Mr. Speaker. How could Senators divorce themselves from their political parties? After all, according to this Bill, 50 of them would be appointed by provincial Governments and the rest by what is called a Regional Appointments Standing Committee of this House. Why should we expect that some six years after their appointment Senators would conduct a reconfirmation