

*The Constitution*

delay coincided with a period of considerable downward pressure on the value of the Canadian dollar in foreign exchange markets, and participants were concerned that the government would not be able to borrow international reserves with which to support the dollar.

That is the uncalled for and unjustified risk to which the Senate action exposed the Government of Canada. The letter is dated May 22, 1985, and if anyone wants a copy of it, I have no objection.

That is why this resolution is before the House, Mr. Speaker. It has become evident that we will have to deal with this Liberal cabal, this unelected coterie of wilful Liberals in the Senate, before our term has expired. That kind of obstruction of the Government's legislative program is unacceptable. The question is: Do the people of Canada deal with a Government led by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who has a majority of 211 in this House of Commons, or do they have to deal with Senator MacEachen the Liberal Leader in the Senate, and Senator Kirby and Senator Grafstein? None of them are now elected, and most of them never have been elected. Are they the hidden Government of Canada? Or is the Government of Canada the Government which sits on this side and in those two wings of the House of Commons? That is the question this resolution puts before this Chamber and the people of Canada.

If the Liberal majority in the Senate, so early in our term—we have not been here a year yet—was willing to obstruct a measure which had been unanimously adopted by the Commons—

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** People think it is a very long time already.

**Mr. Crosbie:**—how will it react on important policy issues upon which there will be strong differences coming forward in the months ahead? How are they going to act then?

It is going to be a lot longer for you chaps, the rat pack.

**Mr. Nunziata:** You brought the Government down after nine months. It was your Budget, John.

**Mr. Crosbie:** The hon. titmice. We can deal with members of the opposition in this House; they are elected and we have to put up with them no matter how vacuous, nonsensical, unethical or lacking in standards they are. However far they sink in the realm of human decency, we have to forgive them; they have been elected. But that does not apply to the Senate because it was never elected.

Some of the measures we want to propose in the months and years ahead will generate controversy in this House. But we have the mandate. We are not prepared to accept a repetition of incidents such as the naval Bill affair or the Coyne affair. We are a new Government with a strong mandate to provide new directions, but we have been frustrated by the Senate. However, we are not prepared to stand by while they do that; if they wish a constitutional crisis, so be it, we will meet the constitutional crisis.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Crosbie:** We believe that Canadians will support us and the principles which underlie a democratic government. Those principles lead us to change our political institutions when they are found wanting. Recent events have prompted us to resolve that the time has come to bring the Senate up to date. This could be done in a number of ways. Abolition of the current Senate is one possible course. Not one member of the NDP is here in the House to listen or participate. Perhaps there will be somebody—oh, there is one coming now. They are not interested in this constitutional conundrum. This is the Party which is supposed to be so worried about the ordinary people of Canada. The members of the NDP, they are not even around when we are debating the form of government of this country and what should happen to our Constitution. Then they come in and whistle. Let us all stop and listen. The whistling makes more sense than anything that gentleman is going to say later in this debate.

● (1250)

Abolition of the current Senate is one possible course. The Premier of Manitoba has said that that is the course he prefers. I understand it is the course that the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) says that he prefers. However, it is not an obtainable course because there are provinces in the country which want the Senate maintained because they believe it helps to protect the regions of the country from domination by central Canada. Therefore, we will not have the abolition of the Senate. As well, the Senate would have to concur in its own demise, so that is not a possible course of action whether we like it or not.

What will the New Democrats do in the face of that? Will they support this resolution or will they oppose it because they prefer to have the Senate abolished? What are their confrères going to do in the Legislature of Ontario? Are they going to help preserve the veto for the appointed Senate, for the Liberal cabal, or are they going to vote in the Ontario Legislature to support this resolution? That will be an interesting question to be decided in the next few months. Will the NDP work with the Liberals in Ontario and here to preserve the unelected Senate?

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I thought you had Ontario sewn up for your resolution.

**Mr. Crosbie:** We believe Ontario to be sewn up, but it remains to be seen.

A second broad option is a major reform of the Senate.

**Mr. Murphy:** You sure screwed it up.

**Mr. Crosbie:** You have your chance to govern in Ontario. Let us see what happens when you little turkeys get some responsibility in Ontario. We will see what happens when they have to take responsibility rather than just sitting around criticizing.

The other broad option, which we think is the most promising one, is a major reform of the Senate. We have all heard many suggestions through the years. Some advocate electing