

Retirement Age for Senators

● (3:10 p.m.)

Chief Dubeau, besides being the only member of the force in the municipality, also drives his own taxi cab, owns a general store and a restaurant.

A female neighbour who lives next door to his restaurant on Champlain Street near St. Jean de Baptiste Street said he continually plays the juke box too loud, disturbing her sleep. But she can do nothing about it.

"Who do you suggest I call to complain about the noise?" she asked.

More discussion revealed that the building which houses the restaurant had been condemned several years ago, but again Chief Dubeau himself would be the person to enforce the condemnation if in fact it can be enforced.

Still more discussion by Mayor René Paulin, four aldermen, and the homeowners' group, revealed that it is probable the restaurant is in a strictly residential zone, and that no building permit had been issued for its construction.

Again, Chief Dubeau would have to arrest Chief Dubeau.

Mayor Paulin promised he would look into all facets of the complaints, including whether or not it is proper for the chief to wear his uniform while tending store customers.

And so the story goes. Conflict of interest is one of the problems and perils of Government at every level not only in Canada but throughout the democratic world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Carleton, but—

Mr. Francis: I was merely seeking—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. Member kindly resume his seat? I realize he is making a point about conflict of interest in the other place, but I cannot help wondering how it is related to the bill which is before us now, an Act to make provision for the retirement of members of the Senate at a certain age. May I suggest to the hon. Member that he relate his remarks to the principle of the bill now under discussion?

Mr. Francis: The point I was making is that surely every elected body faces this problem. Conflict of interest is not a problem which calls for abolition; it calls for the reinforcement of the institution itself by bringing new blood into it by steps such as the measure before this House proposes today, and for that reason I support it.

May I suggest a number of the very useful things which, I have observed from my experience of this place, are done by members of the Senate in such a way as to make an important contribution to the Government of this country? In recent years we have had a very high turnover of members of this chamber in the course of election campaigns. The elections of 1957 and 1958 brought about a turnover of very substantial proportions

and the elections of 1962 and 1963 did the same. A Parliament which experiences a rapid turnover in its membership suffers corresponding dislocation. Even the most conscientious of new Members have to learn the procedures; they have to learn the customs and the rules; they have to learn a good deal about the processes of Government itself and how the institution functions. They are appointed to committees, more or less haphazardly to start with; then they make a choice according to their interest and talents. This is a procedure which takes time. I think a good deal of the difficulty of this 26th Parliament arises not only from the fact that it is a minority Parliament but that we have such a large proportion of Members who are relatively new and inexperienced in parliamentary procedure.

Among those who have been available to give counsel and advice to new Members, explain the rules and extend a helping hand in a friendly way, are members of the other place. It is difficult for me to name individuals and I hope certain members of the other place will recognize that by not naming them at this time I am not in any way reflecting on them. Parliament is in many ways a competitive place and to a considerable extent each Member is on his own. Each is concerned about his own constituency, about the performance of the group to which he belongs and about the dignity of Parliament as a whole. The role of members of the other place in making a contribution based on their experience, their knowledge and their background is something which should not be minimized.

In the fall of 1963 I had the honour and privilege of being part of a delegation which represented Canada at the Commonwealth Conference in Malaysia, a country which now faces serious internal and external difficulties. The head of our delegation was Senator Donald Cameron, who is very active indeed. He is not a man who identifies himself closely with parties and politics but he is a man who has given a great deal of conscientious service to Canada, and he has given continuity to the delegations which represent us at commonwealth conferences, at the United Nations and in many other areas. I am told that at the United Nations men such as Senator D'Arcy Leonard and Senator Yuzyk have made outstanding contributions.

In the course of this debate some hon. Members, particularly the hon. Member for