

questions is from a different angle than that of others, and our debates may reveal a slight difference in fundamentals on the part of different members—though I should find it rather difficult to define clearly what the fundamentals are. But mere party warfare has been entirely absent from the discussions of this house, though by no means have politics in the broadest sense of the term been in any way excluded from our thoughts. Do not misunderstand me for one moment. I am a member of the Liberal party; I believe in it, take part in its activities and hope to continue to do so; but, without going into it at greater length or more particularity, I think my fellow members will understand me when I say that mere petty political warfare has been absent from our debates.

Hon. Mr. Duff: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: We are a judicial body, and in my humble judgment we have lived up to that role with a fair degree of continuity throughout the years, viewing measures before us in an independent and more or less detached way, the one big thought in our minds being the effect of the proposed legislation upon the Canada of which we are proud to be citizens.

The mover of the resolution himself admitted that any troubles which he has encountered in getting government legislation passed through the Senate have come not so much from the Conservative opposition or the official leader of that opposition as from members of his own party. It seems to me that this proves, or at least indicates, the partisan detachment of our members, the readiness of those who occupy the benches here to consider the interests of Canada far above party interests, independently of any control by the government which appointed us.

But, honourable senators, that is not my best answer to the mover's proposal under this head. My best answer is that the Senate has no responsibility for the appointment of its own members. Who is to be appointed to the Senate is none of our business. By the British North America Act the power of appointment is given to the Governor, which means the Governor in Council, and by the practice through the years it has become one of the prerogatives of the Prime Minister. Neither of the two Prime Ministers under whom I have served has seen fit to ask my advice in the matter, and I tender to my fellow members the thought that it would be wisdom on my part to wait until it is asked, rather than proffer it gratuitously. And what applies to me in this regard may apply equally or perhaps more forcefully to the Senate at large. The responsibility for the appointment of senators rests upon the mover

of this resolution and his colleagues in the Cabinet. It is not our responsibility.

Hon. Mr. Duff: Quite right.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: It is government policy, which I think should be discussed around the cabinet table in the east block rather than in this chamber.

A further suggestion offered was that one-third of the new appointments to the house be made for periods of five years, and that the appointees be eligible for reappointment. In my humble view, honourable senators, the strength of the Senate of Canada lies in its independence. With the steadily increasing responsibility of the government, in this and other lands where the cabinet system of government is in vogue, the House of Commons has become more and more the creature of the cabinet, and the cabinet has become more and more subject to the influence of the civil service. This is not true of the Senate. There is no government control over this body. Honourable senators have nothing to fear and nothing to hope for: none of us seek advancement or promotion of any kind. So long as we leave appointments to the Senate as they are today, with only the methods of defeasance that appear in the British North America Act, and so long as we have nothing to fear but the promptings of our own conscience, and nothing to seek but the good will of our neighbours and fellow citizens, that is as it should be.

Hon. Mr. Duff: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: In the course of the discussion of Senate reform in years gone by I have heard a good many methods outlined for ruining this chamber, but I do not recall ever having heard one more effective than that at the end of every five years one-third of our members should be dependent upon the appointing authority to continue their membership. A scheme of that kind would reduce such members to mere puppets of the administration of the day. Their positions would be analogous to that of civil servants with a five-year contract. In my opinion, honourable senators, it would utterly destroy the independence of senators appointed on that basis, and in all probability it would endanger the independence of the Senate as a whole.

Hon. Mr. Haig: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I am, therefore, strongly opposed to any such proposal.

A further reason advanced for the proposal was couched in these words:

... to bring fresh current opinion into this house at regular intervals.

Well, the fresh current looks to me like a cold, damp draft.