

go with advances in the basic principles of government. It seems to me the reason for this lies in the fact that our parliamentary system always has been able to meet the needs of the day, even if sometimes in a groping and dilatory fashion. The need of constantly cultivating our British type of democracy cannot be over-emphasized. Compared with ancient forms of government, our parliamentary institutions are relatively young, and it might be ventured as a truism that people do not yet know how to appreciate freedom. The totalitarian forms of government such as Italian Fascism, German Nazism and Russian Socialism, all are reactions from democracy to the ancient autocracies. So it is, I say, that there is a real need of consciously and continuously cultivating our democratic institutions, of trying to improve and better them, if they are to survive, and if freedom as we know it is not to perish.

We are now living in a time of great changes—changes brought about by war, by science, and by vast increases in man's ability to produce wealth. It is about some of the things which the Senate, as one of the two federal Houses of Parliament, does and can do to meet the special needs of our day that I propose to speak to-night.

First, however, let me say a word about the Parliament of Canada and the place in our system of government which is occupied by the Senate. I have said that we follow the pattern of the British governmental structure. There, Parliament consists of the King, the Lords and the Commons. Here it is the King, the Senate and the Commons. You all know that members of the House of Commons, sometimes called the Lower House, are elected, while the Senate consists of men and women appointed by the Crown. The House of Commons is constituted on the principle of representation according to population; and so it is that, out of today's membership of 245 in that Chamber, 147—more than one-half—come from the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The Senate is constituted on the principle of representation according to territorial divisions. For this purpose, at the time of Confederation, Canada was regarded as consisting of three separate areas, Upper Canada (Ontario), Lower Canada (Quebec), and the Maritime Provinces. British Columbia and the other Western Provinces subsequently were constituted a fourth territorial division and given equal representation with the other three. Accordingly, our full Senate now consists of 96 members, with 24 being nominated from and representing, respectively, the Western Provinces, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. If time permitted, it might be useful to make some detailed review of the historical background and the reasons for the differences in the constitution of our two Houses of Parliament and the reason that the House of Commons, on the one hand, is elective, and the Senate, on the other hand, is nominative. However, as I prefer to address myself particularly to the present-day function and purpose of the Senate, I will be content with one or two brief observations regarding the reasons which prompted the Fathers of Confederation to lay out the pattern of our national parliament as they did. I think that I can best do this by stating two simple propositions and then making a few comments on each.

The first is that if there had not been provision for a Senate or "Upper House," as it sometimes is called, there could have been no Confederation and no Dominion of Canada as

we know it to-day. The importance attached to the constitution of the Senate by the Fathers of Confederation can be gathered from the fact that practically the whole of six days out of a total of fourteen spent by them in discussing the details of the Confederation Pact, were devoted to this branch of our parliament. A perusal of the Confederation Debates of 1865 makes it clear that the Maritime Provinces and Quebec declined to enter the scheme of union unless there was a Senate. They anticipated the situation which, in fact, obtains today, where only two of the regions of Canada, on the basis of population, could control the deliberations of the House of Commons. As was said at the time by Sir John A. Macdonald: ". . . In order to protect local interests and prevent sectional jealousies it was found requisite that the three great divisions into which British North America is separated, should be represented in the Upper House on the principle of equality."

The provinces, and especially those which I have mentioned, in joining a union in which they were to surrender a large measure of their independence, wanted to be sure that a parliamentary majority, supported in some sections of Canada but perhaps not in others, could not legislate against their interests, local or racial, without the balance-wheel of a second chamber; a sort of court of review in which the respective territorial regions of the country were to be equally represented and which would be less dependent on the passing fancies of the electors than the House of Commons. Thus, in the same speech to which I have already referred, Sir John A. refers to the Senate as "the sober second thought in legislation." There is an important piece of evidence that the sentiment as expressed by Quebec and the Maritimes then has not changed since 1867. As recently as 1927 a Dominion-Provincial conference was asked to consider the subject of abolition or reform of the Senate. The provinces were unanimously opposed to abolition and there was no suggestion for reform of sufficient merit to warrant a conclusion of the assembly.

I have said that without provision for a Senate there could have been no Confederation. The second proposition which I would now state is that, without a Senate, even now it is doubtful if Confederation could long endure.

While my first submission is easily established from the records of the past, my second may not be so obvious. It rests on the conviction that the need to safeguard the minority and sectional rights and interests of Canada is as great today as ever it was. In recent years, we have seen new parties spring up—often on a local or provincial basis. To-day there is one party which dominates in Alberta and enjoys little support anywhere else. There is another that is now powerful in Saskatchewan with limited support elsewhere. There are at least three parties in Quebec contending for support which have no backing in the other provinces. The possibility of a House of Commons dominated by a party or combination of parties composed of members from only two of the four great regions of Canada cannot be dismissed. Absence of the guarantee of "sober second-thought" for legislation by a body conscious of the interests of all parts of the country would give rise to anxiety and, possibly, in time, would result in a demand for separation. Even without any unusual party situation such as I have stipulated, in these days when legislation