

Senator Donahoe: I am tempted to ask the honourable senator if he has ever heard the story about the camel and the Arab. On a cold winter's night, the camel asked permission to shelter slightly under the tent and, by morning, the camel was completely covered and the Arab was out in the cold. If the honourable senator can tell me that we are only partially pregnant, I will respond that I do not believe it. We will go the whole way, and I will prove it to you later.

Senator Frith: My goodness! What did the Arab do before he left?

Senator Donahoe: I will prove it to you later by reminding you of the attitude towards the Senate of some very important people involved in the conduct of the affairs of this country.

I accept what Senator Frith has had to say, that, as of this moment, the suspensive veto is only applicable to legislation dealing with the Constitution of Canada. However, I assert, subject to contradiction, that it will not be long before the suspensive veto applies to every piece of legislation that reaches this house. I make this argument almost entirely on that basis because that is what I believe and that is what no one can successfully stop me believing.

Like Senator Roblin, I believe that the federal state which Canada has been up until now, and such as it will remain for a short time, and as some people in certain quarters say it will continue to be—although I am not one of those people—requires an effective second chamber. I agree that the need for such arises from the fundamentally regional characteristics of our country. I believe, as does Senator Roblin, that if no Senate had ever been conceived by the Fathers of Confederation, no nation would ever have been developed. No Senate; no Confederation!

I further believe that, in the 115 years that have elapsed since Canada was formed, the Senate has justified its existence. It has operated in such a way that it has come to be a true asset to the people of Canada by the originating, the improving and the passing of the laws of this country.

If one takes the trouble to read what Senator Roblin has said, one will see that he finds that the agreement made was to have two houses, and that they were, firstly, the House of Commons, based on representation by population and, secondly, the Senate, based on territorial representation. He says that representation by population satisfied the interests of Upper Canada. I do not use the term "Upper Canada" in any disrespectful way. Upper Canadians are those who had the good fortune to be born in Nova Scotia, and I understand they use the same term for those who come from Newfoundland.

Hon. Jack Marshall: Certainly.

Senator Donahoe: Upper Canada is the name by which this part of Canada was known prior to Confederation. There were two areas, Upper and Lower Canada. Interests were satisfied by the form of Confederation which was adopted. They asked for one-man-one-vote equality, regardless of where a person came from. Senator Roblin very properly said that the maritimers and the French-speaking minority—then, as now, concentrated in Quebec—had other aims and views. They saw

Upper Canada as possibly being able to impose its will on regional minorities. They sought a counterbalance, and the forum provided to them was the Senate.

I read an article which said that territorial and regional representation was not the only reason for the formation of the Senate in 1867, and I do not even pretend that it was, but I certainly say it was a major factor. I further say that, in the part of the country from which I come, it was used as the point of all points to achieve acceptance of Confederation. It was not easy in my province. There were those, in some political parties—to which I have never offered my support—who did not believe in Confederation. The government of the day went to London and tried to get them to do away with Confederation.

Some Hon. Senators: Shame, shame.

Senator Donahoe: They ran elections in my province and were known as anti-Confederates. This is only an aside. The only point I want to make is that people who talk about history ought to know a little bit about what took place in times gone by.

In my part of the country, regional representation was the reason put forward for having a Senate. The counterbalance that made Confederation palatable was the institution of the Senate, and it was devised, largely, for that purpose.

• (1520)

Senator Roblin and I share the view that it is proper that we have a second chamber. We part company on the proposition that a second chamber would be more effective than it is now if its members were elected. We meet again when we agree that Canada needs an effective federal chamber to represent regional interests. We part company again on the question as to whether or not those interests would be better served by electing senators rather than by appointing them.

I do not propose, in these few remarks, to advance any proposition as to how this could be made a more effective chamber. I said on a previous occasion that I was of the firm conviction that we could reform the Senate in such a way that it would become more meaningful and more effective, and I still believe that, but the only purpose of the motion before us today is to recommend to us one particular method of reform—election; and I am confining my remarks to my views as to what "election" means.

Some may say that that approach is negative, but I do not believe that any form of election would produce better senators or a better Senate than the one we now have. On the other hand, I believe, particularly in light of the amended Constitution which is about to be given to our nation, that the quality of the people elected to the chamber would be less than the quality of those who now occupy the chamber by appointment.

I was not going to mention this, but I have talked to a number of senators about this, and they have talked about the possibility of an elected Senate. I addressed one question, and one question only, to them, that being: Were there to be an elected Senate, would you run for election? Without question,