

Hon. Mr. Aseltine:—and to preserve the independence of the Senate. At the present time there are three times as many members on the opposite side of this chamber as I have in my party on this side; however, that has not interfered in any way with getting business of the Senate properly done. The same thing happened in 1921. After the election of that year the Opposition in the Senate had a majority. This was also the case after the election of 1935. And now, in 1959 the Opposition here has a very large majority—as I said, it has about three times as many members as we have on the Government side. In the past this has not interfered with the dispatch of business in a non-partisan manner.

I remember reading the Senate *Debates* of 1922. That was the first session after the election of 1921. Senator Lougheed had formerly been the Leader of the Government forces in the Senate, and when he got up to speak in 1922 he told the Honourable Senator Dandurand, who was then the Leader of the Government, that even though there was a majority against the Government in this chamber he would see to it that the business of the Senate was not interfered with by virtue of that fact, and that he would do everything to carry on and help with the legislation. In reply, Senator Dandurand said:

Here, honourable gentlemen, I crave permission to take up a matter which is not contained in the Speech from the Throne. It may seem a matter personal to myself, but it bears on the conduct of affairs of this chamber. I refer to an attitude of mind which has permeated the Senate through tradition and for a long period of years. At the root of the matter is the whole question of the function of the Senate and the exercise of its powers. Should it be administered by party groups—by a Ministerial party and an Opposition? I confess that ever since I entered this chamber I have been reluctant to submit to party rule. I thought that the Senate should be, in appearance as well as in reality, an independent body exercising quasi-judicial functions.

In 1936, when the Government changed again, the Right Honourable Arthur Meighen had something to say on the same subject. I will read what he said, as appears in the Senate *Debates* of 1936, at page 20:

We shall receive the legislation of the Administration in the spirit in which—I say it with all appreciation—honourable members opposite received ours in the years that have gone by. In this house we have made an effort, which has been common to both sides, to review carefully and to improve legislation with a single eye to the good of Canada. In that work we had the assistance—the industrious assistance—and the utmost co-operation of the honourable senator who now leads this House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) and of those associated with him. We owe it to them that we now reciprocate to the full. We owe it to them that we utterly abandon prejudice and deal with legislation on its merits. We owe it to them that we make the committees of this house a medium by which all persons peculiarly and directly interested

in and affected by legislation may have their arguments heard and make their wishes known, to the end that our legislative product may be the more acceptable. Such service we have endeavoured to perform and we shall endeavour to perform in days to come. It may be, indeed, that the field of opportunity for review and improvement will be enlarged in these years beyond what it has been in the five years that have gone by . . . Be that so or not, it will be the endeavour of us all, whether we are in the majority or in the minority, to make our own conduct a credit to this house and to Parliament.

It will be our desire that as little of partisanship as possible invade our deliberations. I am sure I am speaking in this respect the mind of all those who sit behind me, and I ask honourable members opposite to let their judgment of our sincerity be governed by results in the next few years.

Senator Dandurand replied as follows, as reported on page 22:

I was happy to hear from my right honourable friend that he did not intend to play the role of leader of an opposition. That is similar to what I told him when he came into this chamber. I remember his first word was—and I appreciated it as a high compliment—that I should be henceforth the opponent worthy of his steel. I told him that I disclaimed any such honour, and moreover would not be an opponent, because I did not recognize the existence of such an institution as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition in this chamber. He seemed somewhat surprised, but I think that during the five sessions we have worked together he has come to realize that there is no systematic opposition here and that we are all bent upon doing our best to improve the legislation that comes to us from the House of Commons.

He then goes on to refer to what happened in 1922.

Honourable senators, these statements have probably been read in the Senate before, and I hope you will excuse me for reiterating them at the present time, but I just wanted to explain why I was not going to make a partisan political speech. I think we should conduct our business in the manner approved by these great men who preceded us. The attitude which prevailed in this house during those years has prevailed here during the past two sessions. I feel that it will continue during this session, and that we will all try to keep our political feelings at as low an ebb as possible. I deeply appreciate the co-operation received at all times during the short time that I have occupied the position of Leader of the Government in the Senate.

At this time I had intended to refer to the Speech from the Throne in so far as it affects the Trans-Canada highway, and then to deal with another subject not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, namely, the Crownsnest Pass rates. However, I will leave those matters for the moment, because I might not have time to deal with them, and also my voice might play out before I could finish what I wished to say about them.