

*Retirement Age for Senators*

**Mr. Regan:** I suggest that all of them are well qualified to be Senators.

**Mr. Peters:** How many are you going to retire? How many throats are you trying to cut?

**Mr. Regan:** I want to say, having mentioned some Nova Scotia Senators and some others who have served well, that I have only scraped the surface. If you were to take out that little red book, "The Parliamentary Guide" and look at the background of Senators, both Liberal and Conservative, then you would find amongst all of those Senators men who have played distinguished and leading roles in public life and, indeed, in the business life of this country, over the years.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that there is room for some changes in the Senate. I feel that the idea of retirement at age 75 is, on the whole, a very good suggestion. I would suggest to the Government that it might be worth while to consider that the pension which is being provided for Senators might be made contributory rather than as outlined in the present bill. I suggest this to the Government and hope they will give it some consideration, because I feel it is a suggestion which does have merit.

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson)—

**Mr. Thompson:** That is right, you don't know.

**Mr. Regan:** I wonder if he would accept a Senate seat if he were offered one?

**Mr. Thompson:** No.

**Mr. Regan:** Methinks thou dost protest too much. I should like to point out, however, that I have great respect for him. I think I would have to remark that he would be a worth-while member of the Senate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Cameron, High Park):** Order; I would appreciate it if hon. Members would give the hon. Member for Halifax a little bit more attention and not ask so many questions.

**Mr. Douglas:** He has had more attention than he has ever had in his life.

**Mr. Regan:** Having completely demolished the arguments of the small parties, I am not going to stay with this subject very long. However, I want to say that I am very happy with the present bill. I have made a minor suggestion for a change in the bill. When we do not have matters which are as pressing as we have at the moment, and after a proper

examination, we may well come to the opinion that other changes in the operation of the Senate should be considered, such as an expansion of the committee work. Perhaps we could use Senators more often on commissions.

I realize this will be a controversial statement to many Members who believe in the concept of responsible Government, but I think I must applaud the former Prime Minister of Canada, now the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) for placing a Cabinet Minister in the Senate who held a portfolio. I am aware of the principle that most of the Cabinet, and in theory all of them, should be here in this House to answer to the House of Commons. However, I still believe that as a compromise—

**Mr. Knowles:** How can such a young man have such old ideas?

**Mr. Regan:**—it is a good suggestion. I hear the same old boys are complaining again. We have the example of the United States cabinet system under which the United States Government can go out in the country when they need to strengthen a portfolio, bring a good man in and utilize him in the cabinet. There is perhaps room within our system to do that. We have today the Parliamentary Secretaries who can answer for the Minister. I would suggest, therefore, that not more than two Ministers of the Cabinet could serve in the Senate and hold portfolios. Some will throw up their hands in horror at this suggestion, but I think if you give it long thought you may find that it does have some element of merit. There is the fact that the former Prime Minister did set such a precedent by appointing a Member from the Commons to hold a portfolio in the Senate. This is a personal opinion I should like to put on the record at this time.

**Mr. Knowles:** You are hoping for an appointment from either side.

**Mr. Regan:** I think this legislation should be speedily passed. I feel that the objection to this worth-while reform arises from the minor parties because of the fact that they, not being in the main stream of political life, cannot benefit from an appointment to the Senate, cannot have an opportunity to contribute. I suggest that, even as Mr. Coldwell was offered a place in the Senate in the past, when they do produce worth-while people who have a contribution to make either Liberal or Conservative Governments may see wisdom in appointing such people to the Senate.