

and New Brunswick joined with Upper and Lower Canada, but with certain reservations. They pointed out that it was quite all right for Ontario and Quebec to agree to a House of Commons in which there would be representation on the basis of population, but that it was obvious that Ontario would have the largest representation, Quebec the second largest, and the Maritime provinces a very small representation indeed. The Maritime Provinces, therefore, made it very clear that they would not enter confederation unless there was to be a second chamber.

The Fathers of Confederation, rightly or wrongly, were strongly of the belief that the system of parliamentary government in Britain was the best system. In that country they had a House of Commons, and a second chamber known as the House of Lords. In most confederations there has been a second chamber. In the United States the second chamber is composed of two senators from each State. Formerly senators were appointed by the legislatures of their particular States, and the system worked so badly that the people rebelled against it and adopted the method of electing members of the Senate for a period of six years, one-third of the membership to change every two years.

When the time came for Canada to deal with the question of a second chamber, the American system was not working well and did not find favour here. Those charged with the framing of our constitution preferred the British system. If you read the debates of that time you will find that it was decided to confer on the Canadian House of Commons practically the same powers as those possessed by the British House of Commons, and to form the Senate on the model of the House of Lords, but with one marked difference. Membership of the House of Lords is based upon the hereditary principle, whereby, when the eldest son of a peer succeeds to the title he becomes a member of the upper house. That principle was not accepted in Canada: it was decided that, whether the method of selection adopted were appointment or election, the determining factor should be merit, not birth. Most of us in this chamber are old enough to remember the struggle which occurred in Great Britain when the then Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, announced the government's intention to curtail the powers of the House of Lords because that chamber had threatened to reject certain legislation. In Britain there is a provision whereby the party in office has the power to swamp the House of Lords by adding to the peerage a number of new members who will support the government's policies. This is popularly known as the swamping provision. In Canada the number of senators was originally fixed at

seventy-two. At that time the government was given the power to appoint six more senators, but thereafter no more could be appointed until the number dropped below seventy-two. The number now that may be appointed, excluding Newfoundland, is eight. That is the only provision of the nature of "swamping". The purpose is to provide against a deadlock between the two houses should the Senate membership be about equally divided.

Why was it decided originally to limit the Senate of Canada to seventy-two members? Why was not the government, supported by the House of Commons, free to nominate as many new senators as it liked? Clearly there was some reason. The reason was that the delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—and although there is nothing in the record to show clearly the sentiment of the province of Quebec, I have no doubt, from my knowledge of the history of Canada and of Quebec, that its delegates were of the same mind—felt that, as Quebec had only sixty-five members while Ontario had eighty-five, it was wise to provide that a majority of the House of Commons, as represented by the government, could not swamp the Senate through the appointment of new senators. This safeguard was insisted on by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

It has frequently been said—probably I have said it myself, but I know now it is wrong—that we are here to represent minorities. That is not true. We do represent a minority, but primarily the minority we were established to represent consisted of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and to some extent, considered from a numerical standpoint, Quebec; but that function has nothing to do with language, religion or issues of that kind.

I remember well the leader of the government telling us how bitter was the feeling in Nova Scotia against confederation, even with the safeguards provided, and if I rightly remember the record, at the election which followed confederation, Sir Charles Tupper was the only Conservative elected from that province. He of course was in favour of confederation. The public of this country does not understand the role of this chamber. From time to time politicians in speaking about the Senate have talked as though it represents minorities in religion, language and so forth. The fact is that we are here primarily to hold confederation together, to give the less populous provinces a voice in parliament which they do not possess in the House of Commons.

Let me illustrate my meaning. Today there are two hundred and sixty-two members of the House of Commons. Of these