

political system. However, abolition has appealed to some Canadians from time to time, and it is the preference of one member of our Committee. It may therefore be useful to set out the arguments for and against abolition.

The arguments put forward by those who favour abolition of the Senate include the following:

- The present Senate is so moribund and adversely regarded that no reform can 'resurrect' it.
- The Senate's legislative review and investigative functions could be carried out by the Commons or by special task forces, thereby saving the cost of a second chamber.
- The present system of appointment contradicts the principle of representation by population in Parliament and consequently harms the democratic process.
- Other changes, such as reform of the Commons or an institutionalized First Ministers Conference, could better achieve the objectives of reform.

The arguments that have been made against abolition are as follows:

- The establishment of the Canadian Senate in 1867, with equal representation of the three regions that existed at that time, was an essential part of the federal bargain. A second chamber representing the regions was considered then, as now, indispensable in a federation.
- A reformed Senate now offers by far the best opportunity to give the people of the less populous provinces a stronger voice in Parliament.
- The Senate has played a useful role in revising legislation and in investigating questions of public policy. Abolition would deprive Parliament of this valuable contribution to its work.

We believe that the arguments for retaining the Senate far outweigh the arguments for abolishing it. It appears to us that some of the priorities of the abolitionists are not the same as ours. For example, some who say that Commons reform is preferable to Senate reform attach high importance to remedying the party imbalance in Commons seats held across the country but little to giving the people of the less populous provinces a stronger voice in Parliament. We believe the latter is essential. We also believe that the Senate is ordinarily better suited than the Commons to carry out legislative review and investigation, partly because its members tend to be less partisan and partly because they have more time to devote to these functions.

### **Reformed appointment**

A large number of witnesses who appeared before the Committee were in favour of retaining the appointment of senators, but also favoured changing the manner or term of appointment, along with other reforms. Many of these witnesses commented favourably on the findings of the Lamontagne Report.