

Retirement Age for Senators

lives, and they perhaps cannot play a decent game of golf. That is all they know about about sports. More and more today there is more leisure time available to the working man. The more automation, the more leisure time he will have. Working hours are being cut down and we have more leisure time. Nobody is responsible for this. It seems that the Government is only now opening its eyes in this respect. After so many years the dust is just being taken out of their eyelids by the sandman. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, intermediate bodies such as labour unions should name Senators, and then we would have people who know what they are talking about. They would know what they were talking about in regard to Hal Banks, for instance. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) mentioned the case of Hal Banks a moment ago. I would be surprised to learn that many Senators know much about labour unions or would defend them. Perhaps some of them would have defended the financial interests involved in this question. But I am sorry to say that we do not have too many of this type of Senator.

We could have Senators named by the federal Government—one third; no more. Then you would have the nation's Government, the federal Government, represented in the Senate. You could have the provincial governments represented in the Senate, and you could have the intermediate bodies represented there, with one third, one third, one third. That is one reform we could institute. Senators could be nominated for ten years, and the next ten years their nomination would be based on the preceding ten years in the Senate, the same as with any Member of this House.

● (4:40 p.m.)

When one wishes to be re-elected he must depend on what he did during the preceding four years. If he contented himself by sitting on his posterior for four years the electorate would likely give him the opportunity to again sit on his posterior, from then on. If that is the view taken by Senators, that they can sit on their posteriors year after year, then it is my opinion that the Senate should be abolished.

If Governments want responsible people to guide them in the governing of this country it seems to me that use could be made of the Senate in this regard. For this reason the best people possible should be appointed to the Senate. At this time those members of the other place are all honourable gentle-

men, but the fact that they are honourable does not mean that they are capable of doing the job which should be expected of them. I do not wish to name any members of that place, but I suggest that three quarters of the members are not in regular attendance.

Abolition of the Senate would throw the entire weight of governing this country on the shoulders of the Members of the Government in this chamber. Minority governments can sometimes be swayed in their opinions, but often majority governments become kings and executioners when there is no control exercised by an Upper Chamber. For that reason we have an Upper Chamber, but it is now obvious that the members of that chamber have been appointed as a result of patronage on the part of the Prime Ministers rather than on the basis of their ability to carry out that job.

In my opinion we should reform the Senate in a way which would be in the interests of the public. One of the tasks that could be performed by members of the Senate relates to royal commissions, of which we have had some 37 in the past, expending many millions of dollars. Surely intelligent members of the Senate could be appointed as commissioners to aid the Government in carrying out these inquiries. At the present time I am afraid there are not many members of that other place who could satisfactorily perform such a task. The majority know nothing about labour, agriculture, or any other subject not associated with finance. The majority of the members of the other place have never done any real work in their lives, but have been for the most part financiers and directors of companies.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me state that I am in favour of Senate reform, rather than abolition. However, my attitude is radical to the extent that if the Senate is to remain as it exists today, without reform, then I support abolition. It seems to me that under present circumstances the Senate is filled with aged gentlemen who have no other jobs or positions, or no other place to sleep. It is common knowledge that they sleep there a good deal of the time.

Mr. E. F. Whelan (Essex South): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to participate in this debate on Senate reform after all those learned Members of Parliament have spoken, but as a farming Member I hope you will be lenient and allow me to ramble as other speakers have done.