

man) said, the elective plan in 1855 did not prove successful. At the time of its adoption they did not have a free hand, because the then members of the legislative council held office under the old system. The same difficulty would be experienced if the plan suggested by the hon. member for Welland were adopted; we would have to commence as they did in 1856, with a practically complete chamber, and deal with the vacancies according to the new plan.

I sympathize with my hon. friend's idea so far as the reforming of the Senate is concerned, but I doubt very much whether his plan would prove as successful as he imagines. As the member for Assiniboia (Mr. J. G. Turriff) said we have many elective bodies in this country—school boards, municipal councils, legislative assemblies, and the House of Commons—and perhaps it is just as well that we should have, as the highest legislative body in the land, a chamber appointed under the selective system. I am strongly in favour of the suggestion of the hon. member for Assiniboia, however, that a change should be made in the manner of making appointments. I think his plan is one that should commend itself to this House, because all the appointments should not be in the gift of only one party. The Conservative party remained in power for eighteen years previous to 1896, and the Liberal party was in power for sixteen years after that date. During the time that each party was in power, each party made all the appointments to the Senate. Members of a Government are human, and their preference always goes to members of their own party. If appointments are made by both parties, it is only just that the party in power should have the majority of the appointments. The mode suggested by the member for Assiniboia is, I think, a very good one; it is better to have the Senate more divided and more in touch, perhaps, with public opinion.

Another reform which ought to be adopted is one affecting the age limit of members of the Senate. The member for Gloucester (Mr. O. Turgeon) seems to think that the older senators are very efficient. No doubt there are exceptions, but I would point out that the age limit of county court judges, which formerly was eighty, a few years ago was set at seventy-five. If, therefore, there is an age limit for those who have to administer the laws, I do not see why there should not be an age limit in respect to those who make or revise the laws. When

a man passes the age of eighty years, his mental powers are somewhat impaired. In this House there are very few men above the age of seventy-five years—I think there are not more than three or four—although I believe that these men are just as good as, if not superior to, those who are younger.

Another reform which I would like to see adopted is that of the appointing of senators for a term of years—say, ten years. They could be reappointed at the end of that term, but upon reaching the age limit they would have to vacate the seat. By appointing senators for a term of years, I think that more changes would result, more new blood would come into the Senate, and the Senate would be more in touch with public opinion. We do not want to see in Canada an Upper House, such as they have in the Old Country, which is a refuge for the aristocracy. We have no aristocracy in Canada, but if the creation of lords and the practice of conferring titles generally is continued, we may have an aristocracy before many years. This country is a democracy, and I think it is the wish of the people that it should remain democratic; that Canada should not have an aristocracy. The second chamber, which is a revising body, should keep in touch with the views and the wishes of the people. Although I want to see reforms adopted, I doubt very much whether the making of the Senate elective instead of selective would bring about the desired results.

Mr. BOULAY (Rimouski) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I regret to say I am not learned in the law, and I have not the slightest intention to discuss the motion introduced by my hon. friend from Welland (Mr. German); I beg, however, to be allowed a few remarks on the question now before the House.

It is to be deplored that the hon. member for Welland did not see fit to bring up this resolution when his party was in power; its chance of becoming law would then have been better. I feel, however, that I owe him my congratulations: Personally I am in favour of an elective senate such as he suggests. The scheme is fully in line with democratic principles and would be of great advantage in many cases. The system would allow every section of the population to elect its own representative to the Upper House, while at present senators are appointed from Quebec or Montreal to represent rural districts, such as the division of the Gulf, for instance. Such dealings are detrimental to the electors of the sections