

as in the United States. I note that the seconder has not spoken on the motion yet, and I hope he will tell us how he explains that to Quebec.

Hon. Jean-Paul Deschatelets: I am waiting for Senator Frith.

Senator Phillips: In a rather lighthearted mood, I should like to ask the mover and the seconder of the motion which of the senators in Quebec they want to dispense with. If one is Senator Flynn, there are certain merits to that idea; if another is Senator Lamontagne, there may be even more merit to that idea.

I mentioned earlier the United States Senate and their method of—

Senator Deschatelets: May I ask Senator Phillips a question before he goes any further?

Senator Phillips: I am not sure that I can enlighten the honourable senator but—

Senator Deschatelets: I am looking for enlightenment.

Senator Phillips: That is obvious, and I will try to help you.

Senator Deschatelets: You are taking it for granted that if Senator Roblin's proposal for an elected Senate were to come forward that Quebec would lose one seat. It would have 23 per cent of the seats. I cannot understand why Quebec could not keep its 24 seats if there were an elected Senate.

Senator Phillips: I said that Quebec had 23 per cent of the seats. Senator Deschatelets' question, if I understand it correctly, is why Quebec would not keep the present 24 seats. If you look at western Canada you will understand that they would want to have the number of senators from each province more evenly balanced than it presently is. That is why I was saying you would lose seats.

I was about to mention the American system, where they have two senators from each state. As honourable senators are aware, the Americans changed their system a number of years ago from an appointed Senate to an elected Senate. Senator Roblin's supporters in the other place are well aware that the Senate was not long in surpassing the House of Representatives as the more important body in the American Congress, and the same would happen in our Parliament. One would think that the Americans had solved all their problems on transportation, regional development and alienation of various regions because they have been electing senators for a long time. According to Senator Roblin, that is the solution. The Americans have had every problem that Canada has had except the language problem. A similar problem is developing rapidly in the United States, but it involves Spanish instead of French.

I recall being in Florida during a break from our pleasant Ottawa winters and the Americans were lining up for gas. The complaints there were that the people in New York and Chicago were burning gas coming from the southern United States, just as in Canada westerners are complaining that the easterners are burning their gas.

[Senator Phillips.]

When I was a member of the House of Commons I drove to Prince Edward Island through Maine to visit my sister in Boston. The complaints I heard in Maine and in Massachusetts made me think of the complaints I heard back home in the Atlantic provinces. An elected Senate had not changed their complaints any, and the southern United States are just as much against the northern United States as the west is against the east in Canada.

Honourable senators will recall an advertisement sponsored by the Democratic Party in the United States when Senator Barry Goldwater was a presidential candidate. That advertisement quoted Senator Goldwater as saying there are times when he would like to take a saw, and saw off the eastern seaboard of the United States. It depicted a saw doing that very thing. Needless to say, Senator Goldwater did not carry the Atlantic states, but he did very well on the west coast and this reminds me of east-west alienation in Canada. Again, honourable senators, an elected Senate did not cure that problem.

Honourable senators, I do not wish to go on too long, but I would suggest that while we are discussing an elected Senate we might pause and reflect on making this chamber a little more functional. One of my suggestions is that the sittings be a little longer. We now see senators arriving at 7.30 on Tuesday evening and looking at the clock at 2.15 on Thursday afternoon ready to leave. I think we could extend our sitting hours, thereby spending more time in the chamber.

We could dispense with a little bit of party discipline. I will be a Conservative and honourable senators on the other side will be Liberals, but it was a mistake to pay the whips because they are becoming too vigorous and too efficient. I should like to see more people voting for or against legislation without having party affiliation influencing them.

When I was appointed to this chamber I advocated that the provinces make a certain percentage of the appointments. At that time I was thinking in the range of 25 to 40 per cent. Since that time, largely on the basis of the Parti Québécois government, I have changed my opinion in that regard. However, the federal government can consult the provinces on appointments. It could be done in a manner similar to that of attorneys general being consulted respecting appointments to the bench. Perhaps appointments to this chamber could be made on the same basis as appointments to the Dutch Senate, where they are made on the basis of the general vote in the last election. If the Conservatives and the Liberals were each to receive 35 per cent of the total vote, they would then each receive one-third of the appointments made for that four-year period.

● (1520)

At one time, I recommended that senators be prohibited from attending caucus because I could not see any great advantage being derived from their being committed to a piece of legislation and, at the same time, attempting to review that legislation in this chamber. Recent events in the Liberal caucus have caused me to reconsider that view. I cannot say that I have come up with a perfect solution to this dilemma.