

Retirement Age for Senators

the position taken by Members of this party regarding the abolition of the Senate. I would ask the Chair to extend to me only the rights which have been extended to those hon. Members who spoke before me in this House. Nothing I intend to say will go any further than the remarks made by the hon. Members to whom I have referred.

The position taken by Members of this Party in respect of the abolition of the Senate, because as it is now constituted it is useless, is taken by many other people. Many other Members of this House agree with the position we are taking, and in this connection I should like to put on record some views expressed by an eminent newspaperman, known as a supporter of the Liberal Party. I have before me a series of articles reprinted from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, compiled in 1961 by Mr. Grant Dexter, who was a very able parliamentary correspondent and, as I have said, a very strong supporter of the Liberal Party. One paragraph of this compilation reads as follows:

As it now exists and has existed since Confederation, the Senate is no more than a haven for party faithful. It is the most potent patronage in the gift of the Prime Minister. It is invaluable in solving Cabinet problems and problems in the majority party. Prime Ministers regard Senate appointments as indispensable to party management and discipline. That is why most have kept a few Senatorial seats vacant as incentives for party supporters, the theory being that every vacancy keeps several hopeful occupants hard at work or contributing to party funds. The reward, when it comes, is generous: a comfortable lifetime salary and expense allowance; an office and secretarial help; free railway transportation and occasional corporation directorships. But once having appointed persons to the Senate, prime ministers and their cabinets have no further interest in the Upper House other than as a possible future haven for themselves.

● (3:50 p.m.)

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that nothing the hon. Member for Port Arthur or any member of our group has said is a more devastating commentary on the Senate than what I have just quoted.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. gentleman permit me to ask him a question?

Mr. Orlikow: Certainly.

Mr. Pickersgill: How does the hon. gentleman, who is a great exponent of social security, I believe, reconcile his views on that subject with the doctrine of abolition of the Senate which he is now espousing?

Mr. Orlikow: It is very simple, Mr. Speaker. I believe in social security for those who need it, for the poor. The Minister

who is proposing this bill is proposing a wonderful scheme of social security for the rich Senators who do not need it. That is the difference.

An hon. Member: Oh, a means test.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, Professor R. H. MacKay, in an article which appeared in *Queen's Quarterly* in the autumn of 1964, had this to say about the Senate:

The real reason why the Senate seems to be composed of nonentities, why it plays such a minor part in making public policy, is not the age of its members, nor their quality, nor life appointments, nor partisanship, but the fact that in an age of democracy the present Senate is largely an anachronism. The House of Commons can always claim to represent the people, and the government of the day the party which the people decided should hold public office. The Senate can make no such claim. Its fatal weakness is that it represents nothing larger than itself. Whatever its legal powers, it has thus no political authority, no mandate from the people as a whole, nor from the people organized by provinces, by municipalities, or any other political grouping. Senators can speak for nothing but themselves.

Professor MacKay is not an abolitionist, Mr. Speaker. I could go on and quote MacGregor Dawson and others. They all agree that the Senate as it is and as it has been for many years discharges no useful function. It seems to me that those Members of the House of Commons who are opposed to abolition can advance only three basic arguments. They can propose that the Senate as it is now constituted serves some useful purpose. We have heard very little on that score because I think Members of Parliament know that their electors simply would not believe it, since it is not true.

Second, they can advance the argument that the Senate should be reformed, and it has been suggested publicly that this measure is the first step in reform. I want to say that after some 40 years during which the Liberal party has talked about Senate reform, this is indeed a mouse which has been produced. It has been suggested privately, if not publicly, that the only reason this very minor proposal has been brought forward is that the Senate would have to agree, and they would not agree, so we cannot do much more that we would like to do. I recommend that those people who believe that should look at Bill No. 3 passed last year by the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec. Bill No. 3 is in the name of a very good Liberal, Mr. Lesage. The title of the bill is "Quebec Parliament Act", and I quote