

The Constitution

despite the fact that these major changes took place in the United Kingdom and in the United States? Basically, the reason is that, for the most part, the Senate has been quiescent. It has not interfered with the elected House of Commons. Therefore, no one has bothered or been forced to take any steps with reference to the Senate. That is basically the reason. But now we see a different tendency, Mr. Speaker. We see a situation where the majority of the present Liberal caucus of Parliament is composed of Senators. There are 72 Senators. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) has 72 Senators in his caucus, and I think it is 42—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Thirty nine others.

Mr. Crosbie: —thirty nine others besides himself in the House of Commons. Liberal Members of Parliament are outnumbered in their own caucus by 72 to 40. So one can understand the dilemma in which this places the Leader of the Opposition. He is dominated by the Senate and the Senate dominates his caucus. The Senators, the cabal, the unelected group which wields the power in the Senate, wields it in the Liberal caucus and, naturally, that poses a dilemma for the Leader of the Opposition. That is why we are likely to see him today do everything he can to postpone this legislation, to prevent us from getting on with the job of bringing Canada into the 20th century electorally and democratically. That is why the Leader of the Opposition is likely to do everything he can to propose amendments, to fiddle with the principle of this resolution, so that the cabal will be left in charge in the Senate, able to thwart the will of the people whenever it wishes. I sympathize with the dilemma in which the hon. gentleman finds himself. But perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps he will spring to his feet as a new George Washington, even with his wooden false teeth, the father of his country.

I am a Senate supporter myself, Mr. Speaker. I think it performs useful functions. It is a place for legislative review and inquiry. Senate committees have done excellent work. I have seen excellent reports, as we all have, from Senate committees. I have praise for their thoroughness. Some of those reports have even gained recognition outside of Canada. But its method of selection is undemocratic, we have to admit that. Therefore, the authority of the Senate is weakened because the Senate does not have the endorsement of the people of Canada in any evident sense.

The Senate has been reluctant, usually, to challenge the will of the elected House. But from time to time, Mr. Speaker, the Senate has caused problems for the operation of parliamentary democracy in this country. It is most quiescent when the majority in the House of Commons is similar to the majority in the Senate, when the Party majorities are the same. In those periods the records show few difficulties. Canadians tend to forget that the Senate has this absolute veto because it does not exercise it, and we have seen that from the years 1965 on to 1985, except for the eight months of interregnum.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Nine months.

Mr. Crosbie: No, it was not nine months. It was eight months, time enough to conceive.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It seemed like nine months.

Mr. Crosbie: Yes, but not to deliver. You will recall that.

We all know Mr. Speaker, that in the last 20 years, the Liberal majority in the Senate did not dare to berk or oppose actions taken by the Liberal Government and by the Liberal majority in the House of Commons. So no one had to worry or bother with the Senate. But the Senate now appears to be in the mood for constitutional confrontation. If that is the case, then, Mr. Speaker, we who are elected by the people of Canada have to be ready to meet that challenge. When the unelected want to disrupt the system, to impose their own arbitrary will, and to oppose those who are elected here by the people of Canada, then we have to be prepared to seize the nettle, not to mind the pricks of the thorns in the nettle, and get on with the job of seeing that this country operates in a democratic fashion.

Mr. Boudria: You are full of sincerity.

Mr. Crosbie: The man who got his start through patronage should not interrupt a statesman-like speech.

Mr. Marchi: You are the expert, John. You are the professional.

Mr. Crosbie: If the hon. gentlemen will just keep quiet for a while, we won't remind them of their patronage antecedents.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You brought patronage to an art form, John.

Mr. Crosbie: What about you?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order.

Mr. Crosbie: The Hon. Leader of the Opposition really takes a chance when he gets on with remarks about patronage. Do you realize, Mr. Speaker, that Senator Lewis's firm received \$479,497.98 in legal fees in the last three years down in Newfoundland?

Mr. Nunziata: You are shameless, Crosbie.

Mr. Crosbie: Or that the Leader of the Opposition's firm down in Newfoundland—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: I have the facts. I am going to deal with you weasels when the time comes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I would like Hon. Members to get on to the relevance of this motion.

Mr. Crosbie: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was diverted.