

FIRST READINGS

Hon. Mr. Aseltine presented the following bills:

Bill X, an Act for the relief of Isabella Potts Younger Ayton.

Bill Y, an Act for the relief of Margaret Alice McDermid Jones.

Bill Z, an Act for the relief of Jacqueline Moquin Verner.

Bill A-1, an Act for the relief of Ruth Chernofsky Shaffer.

Bill B-1, an Act for the relief of Florence Lachovitz Michael.

Bill C-1, an Act for the relief of Eugenia Jean Diakonuk Cuthbertson.

Bill D-1, an Act for the relief of Ruth Moffatt Bell Lansing.

Bill E-1, an Act for the relief of Kurt Roberts, otherwise known as Kurt Rosenbaum.

Bill F-1, an Act for the relief of Margaret Stevenson Erskine Withenshaw.

Bill G-1, an Act for the relief of Cecile Duguay Quenneville.

Bill H-1, an Act for the relief of Margarete Marie Hyduk Towstuk.

Bill I-1, an Act for the relief of Joseph Maurice Fernando Lemieux.

Bill J-1, an Act for the relief of Donald Benedict Cullen.

Bill K-1, an Act for the relief of Valeda Ardell Derick Thorley.

The bills were read the first time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall these bills be read the second time?

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Next sitting.

THE SENATE AND ITS WORK

MOTION—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from Monday, February 12, the adjourned debate on the motion of Hon. Mr. Robertson for the appointment of a special committee to inquire into and report upon how in its opinion the Senate may make its maximum contribution to the welfare of the Canadian people.

Hon. John T. Haig: Honourable members, the motion by the leader of the government in this house is in these words:

That a Special Committee of the Senate be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, whatever action in its opinion may be necessary or expedient to enable the Senate to make its maximum contribution to the welfare of the Canadian people.

Before I discuss that motion I wish to spend a few minutes sketching the historical background of government in Canada. I presume this information is well known to

honourable senators, but I am speaking for the benefit of the public generally.

During the period from 1855 to 1867, when Ontario and Quebec were known as Upper Canada and Lower Canada, they were governed by a Legislative Council of twenty members—ten from each province; a Legislative Assembly of 84 members—an equal number from each province—and the Governor in Council, who had power to increase the number of members of the council if it was deemed proper.

During the period from 1855 to 1867—the dates which I give may not be exact, but they will at least be approximate—this country had a new government about once a year.

Hon. Mr. Euler: It was like France is now.

Hon. Mr. Haig: The Honourable George Brown was the active leader of the Liberal party in Ontario, and Mr. McDonald, later Sir John A. Macdonald, led the Conservative party in that province. The Honourable Georges Etienne Cartier was the active leader of the Conservative party in Quebec. For ten or twelve years prior to 1867 a great struggle was going on to establish a stable government in this country; but all efforts failed, and the leaders whose names I have mentioned acknowledged their failure. They recognized the impossibility of their task, and they were such great Canadians that they frankly stated that the deadlock which existed must be settled in some way. They were backed up in their stand by the British Government, which was anxious then, and it has been ever since, to have Canada govern itself.

Canada then, as now, was a close neighbour of the United States, and that country was anxious for the establishment of a stable government in Canada. Fundamentally, there was a strong sense of patriotism in this country, and the leaders of the political parties in Ontario and Quebec sent out a call for delegates from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland to meet delegates from Ontario and Quebec, with a view to establishing such a stable government.

The delegates met first at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and later in Quebec. At these conferences a number of resolutions were drawn up which formed a basis of a union of the provinces. The details of those resolutions do not affect the subject under discussion, but their results are far-reaching. When the delegates from Newfoundland went back home with the proposals which had been made, their government refused to accept them, and thereby declined to join with Canada. The provinces of Nova Scotia