

*Retirement Age for Senators*

As a matter of fact, there are many representative organizations in our country. There are the Confederation of Canadian Workers, the Farmers' Association, the Farm Producers' Association, the Association of Canadian Industrialists and the Chambers of Commerce which represent all Canadian businessmen and industrialists. In order to complete the link between some political groups which could use their influence toward the appointment of senators, members of the third parties could be chosen and appointed by the representatives of those various national organizations.

Mr. Speaker, before concluding my remarks, I would point out that the reform provided for in Bill No. C-98 is not important enough to make us lose much of our time in considering it. I only hope that this contemplated reform does not become another smokescreen to have the public believe that this measure brought down by the Liberal party constitutes a far reaching reform of the Senate, because we do not believe that such a timid reform can be labelled as far reaching as the one which is being suggested by other members of this house, that is, the abolition of the Senate.

● (3:00 p.m.)

[Text]

**Mr. Lloyd Francis (Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I think we saw just before the noon recess a little bit of fallout from private members' hour in regard to this bill. I have always been interested in remarks of the chief spokesman for the N.D.P. party in this House, and in particular in regard to Bill No. C-54. It so happens that 92 private bills have been submitted this session, and 42 of them come from his own party. This meant that Bill No. C-54 of the hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has become trapped in the large number of bills submitted by his colleagues, and the result was the attempt to adjourn this debate along lines which Your Honour properly ruled out of order.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, to arise in support of the measure the Government is now putting before the House, but not without some considerable reservations with respect to the nature of the debate that has taken place to date.

By tradition our Parliament has three branches, the sovereign represented by a Governor General, the Upper House and the Lower House. This was the original symbolism of the three maple leaves which the provinces

of Upper and Lower Canada adopted before confederation; but when some Members of this House speak in disparaging terms about individuals in the other place, which certain members have done—I am not suggesting they all have—this in turn reflects on Parliament itself.

It reflects on our own constitution. Our constitution has changed a great deal throughout the years. It is changing now. Changes are not always a matter of formal legislation, or bills of rights, or documents which can be pinpointed at any one period of time. I wonder, for example, how many Members of the House are aware that a Prime Minister of this country once sat in the other House, Sir Mackenzie Bowell—

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Two of them—the other was Abbott.

**Mr. Francis:** I had not been aware there had been two and I accept correction from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill). But in December 1894 Sir Mackenzie Bowell was then a member of the other place. He became Prime Minister and he never sat in the House of Commons for the entire period of 16 months. I am sure, incidentally, his record has not been judged to be one of the most successful in this office.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Putting it pretty mildly.

**Mr. Francis:** But by the same token I think it was an indication of the high regard in which members of that place were held at that time.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Maybe they deserved it at that time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Francis:** The hon. Member says they deserved it then.

**Mr. Orlikow:** I said maybe.

**Mr. Francis:** Let us look at the entire record in terms of what we are doing. Surely the measure before us today is a very important and necessary first step. It will have the effect of reducing the average age of members of the other house and bring about the retirement in future of a good number of members who have not been contributing, despite some very able and conspicuous exceptions for whom I have the highest regard. But surely this is the first step toward reinvigorating the other place and having it play a more permanent and active role in the conduct of Government.