

servative, had been able to give just representation to the minority in Ontario through the power of appointment to the Senate. The same thing might be said of Quebec where under an elective system of appointment to the Senate, even without any feeling, it would be impossible in many districts to have a sufficient number of English representatives from that province in the House of Commons. Similar conditions might arise in any other province where we have the Irish Roman Catholics, the French Roman Catholics and the English element, each anxious to have fair representation in this House, but in some cases unable to do so owing to the way in which the population is distributed. In such a case fair representation cannot be obtained at the hands of the electorate, but can be obtained through this power of appointment. Take New Brunswick for instance. I remember a few years ago, when my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) was at the head of the Government, and there was a Senate vacancy belonging, as we thought, to the French minority, he convinced me that I should let the vacancy be filled by an Irish Catholic because in the province of New Brunswick the Acadian people, the French population, had their fair share of representation in the House of Commons while the Irish Catholics could not send one of their own to this House; and therefore it was in the interest of justice that the Irish Catholic element should have a larger representation in the Senate and they had the right, so far as the Senate alone was concerned, to such representation. In that way both minorities in the Maritime Provinces did obtain just representation, just proportional representation, in the Senate. As I say, it is one of the reasons why the Fathers of Confederation decided to adopt the appointive system instead of the elective system.

The hon. member for Halifax (Mr. A. K. Maclean), has said that the elective system would be a very expensive one. No doubt it would, and that is another consideration against it.

It is said that the Senate has on many occasions shown partisanship. I agree with the hon. member for Welland (Mr. German) that when the members of the Senate in 1897 or 1898 rejected the Yukon Bill which provided for the construction of a railway in that country, we as Liberals perhaps thought at the time that the Senate might have been actuated by partisanship. It may be that the experience of today has convinced the population of Can-

[Mr. Turgeon.]

ada that, from a practical standpoint, the Senate were right in their decision. It has been said that the Senate showed partisanship in rejecting the Naval Bill of 1912. May I remind the House that the Senate at the time acted most wisely. They did not reject the Naval Bill, I cannot allow that statement to remain uncontradicted. The Senate at the time did what the constitution, in the pure spirit of democracy, permits them to do, force an appeal to the country; and if the country had supported the Bill the Senate was prepared at the next session to stand by it.

There is another point which I wish to raise. My hon. friend from Assiniboia (Mr. Turriff) has mentioned an age limit of seventy-five or about that age. Let me say that since I have been in this House and have had an opportunity to observe the Senate, I have found that in the Senate, without mentioning any names, it is those past seventy-five who have been most active in the Senate, and have given the most efficient service.

Mr. TURRIFF: Make the limit one hundred years.

Mr. TURGEON: It shows the wisdom of the Fathers of Confederation that with all our attempts to amend the constitution and reform the Senate, we cannot reach any solution. That simply means that they acted so wisely that we cannot amend their work. They foresaw that point also, and made the reservation that when a senator vacates his seat for two years he forfeits it, and therefore when he becomes incapable of attending the Senate and has stayed at home for two years the Government must appoint another man.

I am not opposed to the amendment which has been brought forward by my hon. friend: I believe, it would be a good thing for us to show the country that we take an interest in this suggestion. I believe, however, that very little reform could be made, except, perhaps the reform suggested by the member for Assiniboia—that more legislation should originate in the Senate, thus keeping the members of the Senate busier and doing away with their complaint that they have to wait for legislation coming from this House.

Mr. EDMOND PROULX (Prescott): I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the fathers of Confederation adopted what they considered to be the best possible plan, having regard to their experience. As the hon. member for Welland (Mr. W. M. Ger-